

Temple Beth Sholom Presents:

Our Voices - A Monthly Newsletter

March 2021 – Adar/Nisan 5781 | Issue 13 | A Jewish Center for Life, Learning, and Connections

Assistance and Events

General Assistance



Mitch Cohen, President – mitchell@familycohen.com

Cantor David Reinwald – dreinwald@tbsoc.com

Ruth Irving, Executive Director – rirving@tbsoc.com

Services | Shabbat Evening Services will be offered online through Livestream and Facebook Live at 7:00 p.m.

Torah Study | Virtually held each Saturday. See <https://tbsoc.com/> for Zoom Link

3/10 | 7:30 p.m. – Jewish Drama with Cantor Reinwald: Join us for the next session to discuss The Whipping Man by Matthew Lopez. See <https://tbsoc.com/> for registration.

3/14 | 10:00 a.m. – Brotherhood Speaker Series: Professor John Bradley Jackson, "Before, During, and After Covid-19". See <https://tbsoc.com/> for registration and Zoom link.

3/17 | Noon – Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Donnell: Part 4 of “Sexy Scriptures” via Zoom.

3/18 | 10:00 a.m. – Enhance Your Passover at Home: Join Johannah Sohn, Ed. D, Director of Youth Education, for an hour of conversation, study, and idea sharing, as we all prepare for another COVID seder. We will share tips for using Zoom effectively, interesting texts to share, projects to do with younger children, and much more for everyone. See <https://tbsoc.com/> for registration and Zoom link.

Worship at TBS

Finding Our Present Selves in the Past

Cantor David Reinwald

This month, we find ourselves as a nation surpassing one year in these topsy-turvy times. None of us imagined that what seemed initially like a short, contained period of quarantine would continue without any predictable end. We headed into the first month of the quarantine last year, and soon found ourselves celebrating Passover in a way that was wholly new and unfamiliar. We did our best to navigate the challenges and made the best of the situation. Amidst our landing in a literal Mitzrayim, the Egypt-like chaos we found ourselves in, we were looking for the familiar and trying to stay connected to our families, friends, and temple community.

This year, we are perhaps better settled into the rhythm and patterns of this new normal. And I am sure we can all say we are tired of it. We want to return to the familiar, but thankfully there are certain things which work in our favor. No traffic, sitting in rush hour, or commuting? Check. Lunch at home in the middle of a workday? Check. Watching the newest popular movies from the comfort of our couch? Check. (cont. on page 2)

On the other hand, we have each felt the effects of the chaos physically, mentally, and spiritually. We are looking to new directions for answers and inspiration. On a recent URJ webinar on visioning and reframing how we approach Passover for a second time during the pandemic, one presenter vividly stated that we have been “pushed from crisis into change.” This spoke to me as much in the present as much as it equally reflected the crux of the story of the Exodus. There is so much for us to learn and take from our history of survival.

So, think about what you are looking for in this moment as we approach Passover. Are you looking for innovations which will help you keep an open mind during this challenging journey? Are you seeking connection with your community? Where are you in your path? I would love to hear about your journey over the past year and where you find yourselves in this unique moment. Feel free to send me an email or give me a call. Let’s connect.

President's Message

Be Prepared

Mitch Cohen, TBS President



As I write the President’s message for March 2021, my thoughts take me back to this time a year ago. I was preparing for a trip to Israel with my Dad. We departed on February 18th, 2020 from LAX and returned on March 1st. I landed and went straight to TBS for our Purim Spiel and carnival. It was typical TBS community fun. I’d like to think that I knew what the future held and was prepared for all the changes that COVID-19 created, but I was not.

As of this writing, there have been 109M cases, and 2.4M deaths worldwide. Our United States has the greatest number of cases (28.6M) and deaths (513K) in the world. And while it’s a relief to know that vaccines are being administered, I am saddened by the ongoing illnesses and loss of life. Personally, I feel a sense of loss for three friends that have died in the past 30 days. All three were husbands and two were fathers. Three wives have lost their life partners. Three children have lost a father, a mentor, a guy that will unconditionally love them and spoil them when Mom looks the other way.

Of all the COVID-19 deaths and the three friends that I have recently lost, how many were prepared for their deaths? As everyone knows, the scout motto is “Be Prepared.” I like being prepared but must admit that there are plenty of times when I’m not. This isn’t a big deal when the only person affected is me, but what are the repercussions for my family and friends?

I have always felt that buying life insurance, establishing a trust, a medical directive, a durable power of attorney, etc. meant that I was prepared. But as I’ve just witnessed, another final gift I can give my family and friends is a plan. Over the past few weeks, I have documented and planned for what they’re to do with my remains. I have set aside a portion of my IRA and 401k for Temple Beth Sholom. My most prized possessions: my kippah and tallit from Jerusalem, Dutch ovens, camping gear, and even my National Parks Passport book will be inherited by loved ones.

Has this been my most melancholy President’s message? Probably. But I take great comfort knowing that I love my family and friends so much that I am prepared.

Brotherhood | Community – Fellowship – Action – Service

Sylvan Swartz, Brotherhood Director of Membership

Our Brotherhood's Speaker Series began in February with Benyamin Cohen speaking about his book, *My Jesus Year*. The next Speaker Series event on **March 14th at 10:00 a.m.** will feature Professor John Bradley Jackson, Director of the Entrepreneurial Department of the Mihaylo School of Business at Cal State Fullerton. His topic will be "Before, During, and After Covid-19". Our third installment of the Speaker Series on **April 11th at 10:00 a.m.** will feature Rabbi Peter Levi, Regional Director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). He will be speaking on Antisemitism and Extremism. Both events will be on Zoom and registration is required.

We are actively seeking TBS students graduating high school in 2021 to apply for one of our \$500 scholarships for college or trade schools. Please ask them to contact Ruth Irving or Sylvan Swartz to apply.

Our annual yellow Holocaust memorial candles will be available once again this year. Watch for more information on how to obtain yours.

Remember, if you are a man or know of one, please consider Brotherhood membership and supporting our youth. Anyone wishing to get more involved can contact me at sylvan@swartzcre.com.



Sisterhood

Brenda Beck, Sisterhood President

[Get Involved in Sisterhood 2021-2022](#)

Right now, Sisterhood is looking towards the future and there are many opportunities to be part of shaping the 2021-2022 Sisterhood year. You can help make a direct impact on programs and events for our congregation.

By participating in Sisterhood, either on the board or as a committee chair, you can make and renew friendships, support your temple, enhance spiritual connections, and help chart a path for Sisterhood. Together we will continue the legacy of more than 75 years of TBS Sisterhood. There is a place for everyone in Sisterhood, regardless of the amount of time you can donate or the number of events you can attend, we have something that is simply perfect for you. Your first step towards a great year with Sisterhood is to reach out and say, "I'd like to be involved." Please contact Brenda Beck at brenda@thebecks82.com or (714) 403-3237.

[Women of Reform Judaism – Fried Women's Conference](#)

Members of the TBS Sisterhood are preparing to attend the upcoming WRJ Fried Women's Conference. This virtual event is scheduled for March 12 – 14 and will bring together hundreds of Reform Jewish women from throughout North America and around the world, hailing from dozens of different Sisterhoods, gathering to learn, share, pray and connect. The conference will feature nationally known speakers, workshops, and breakout sessions with innovative ideas for attendees to bring back to their sisterhood and inspiring worship services.

Any TBS Sisterhood member who would like to take part in this virtual event is welcome to participate. A limited number of scholarships to cover the cost of the registration fee will be made available to members who are not currently serving on the Sisterhood Board. If you would like more information, including the link for registration, please contact Brenda Beck at brenda@thebecks82.com or (714) 403-3237.

Our Youth

Early Childhood Center

Tamara Levin, Director of Early Childhood Education



The ECC is gearing up for summer camp! At Camp Sholom Katan, an extension of the Temple Beth Sholom Early Childhood Center, and a prelude to Camp Sholom, your preschooler will enjoy an on-site summer camp experience in our beautiful and enriched early childhood setting. Our professional preschool staff put on their counselor hats to welcome your child to the fun filled days of summer. Please see the TBS website or contact the ECC office at 714-628-4640 for registration and more information.

Religious School

Johannah Sohn, Ed.D, Director of Youth Education

We have been having such a wonderful time in our Religious School classes! Perhaps you or someone you know would like to join us for a Sunday morning class and experience our unique approach to Jewish education? Email Johannah Sohn, jsohn@tbsoc.com to set up a time to join us.

Something to Kvell About – Recognizing our Teens and Young Adults

Monica Engel, Social Action Member



I assume **Megan Griffin** played doctor when she was a child. Her passion for the medical field grew from the time she was 5 and blossomed when she entered high school and shadowed an Orthopedic Surgeon who had reconstructed her knee after a soccer injury. It was then that she became fascinated with surgery and understood the profound impact that modern medicine has on everyone. Also, in high school, she travelled to Israel with some of her peers. It was the first time she understood and accepted what it was to be Jewish and was a significant feature in her search for a university. She attended UC Berkeley and after her Freshman year she became an Emergency Medical Tech. She volunteered as part of the Berkeley Medical Reserve Corps and worked at Rock Medicine, an organization that provides medical care at events such as Outside Lands and 49ers games. In 2018, Megan attended Birthright and lived in Israel for 3 months. Megan worked on an Internship at Tel Aviv University where she experienced working with medical devices. In May 2020, she received a degree in Human Biology from UC Berkeley and returned home.

Megan currently works for Care Ambulance, a 911 response company. While on the job with a coworker at St. Francis Hospital in L.A. her patient, as well as another, waited for 7 hours for a bed and much needed oxygen. When they finally had a bed, they had to share the oxygen. She and her coworker were interviewed by ABC Channel 7 and Good Morning America regarding their experience in hospitals during the pandemic. Megan has received a vaccine and urges everyone to do the same. She will be applying to Physician Assistant programs this upcoming cycle to start the next part of her career in medicine in 2022. You Go Girl!!!

If you know of a TBS youth who practices *tikkun olam*, community service, or is simply on an uplifting path, please contact Monica at sovta11@gmail.com to highlight them in this section.

Committee Updates

Interim Rabbi Search Committee

Rachel Benson, IRSC Chair

While we have no “new” news to report, we want the congregation to know that we are continuing to work diligently through the process of reviewing resumes, interviewing candidates, and ultimately finding our Temple an Interim Rabbi to start in July, 2021.

Bylaws Committee

Jack Holmes, Bylaws Committee Chair

Based on discussion and at our most recent congregational meeting and recommendations from the NCRCR, The TBS Board of Directors formed a committee to review and clarify our institutional bylaws. This committee includes Andrea Wasserman, Todd Litman, Mike Rubin, and Jack Holmes. After several months of review, writing, and editing, the committee submitted various proposals to the Board which were discussed, edited further, and ultimately approved for submission to the congregation. The complete redlined bylaws containing the edits are posted on the TBS website for your review and will be emailed out this month. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any committee or board member.

Social Action

Committee Update

Paula Pitluk, Social Action Chair



The TBS Social Action Committee has been hard at work reaching out to our temple community and beyond. This year, we are connecting with Casa Teresa, an organization that provides shelter and support to pregnant women and new mothers. Volunteers prepare a monthly Sunday dinner for the residents and provide additional support as needed. Please contact Steffani Belasco to help with meals.

We also continue to educate ourselves and our temple community about the causes of and solutions to homelessness through a Speaker’s Series. Join us for our next event with Illumination Foundation. Their services in the past year included recuperative care for over 4900 individuals in OC. Patients recently released from hospitals were assisted with interim housing, integrated medical oversight, and intensive case management while striving to break the cycle of homelessness. Details will be emailed in the weekly Shavu’on email and posted on the TBS website.

If you are looking for another way to get involved in our community, Orange County United Way has created a giving opportunity that is perfect for all ages. The WELCOME HOME BASKET program provides home essentials for families in need as they get back on their feet. Details are on the Orange County United Way website: <https://www.unitedwayoc.org/>

Thank you for being a generous and giving community. If you are interested in joining us in our work, please contact Paula Pitluk at pkpteach@gmail.com.

Mitzvah of the Month

Monica Engel, Social Action Member



Our February Mitzvah of the Month for warm clothing for the residents of Orange County Rescue Mission was an amazing success. With the help of Mitch Cohen and his trusty truck, our great custodians Fabian and Octavio, and my right-hand man, Irv, we delivered a sizable amount of warm clothing to OCRM. The generosity of members who sent me checks so I could shop for them and those who were able to deliver directly to TBS is an amazing example of tikkun olam. We are team TBS!

Our Mitzvah of the Month for March will be **NEW** underwear and socks for men, women, and children. If you would like to donate but are unable to shop you can either send a check payable to Monica Engel and I can send you a receipt or to Temple Beth Sholom "earmarked" for the Mitzvah of the Month. All donations are tax deductible! I love to shop - it's my hobby. I'm proud to represent Temple Beth Sholom and this mitzvah with your support.

Calling All Cooks!

Steffanie Belasco, Social Action Member

What better way to spend meaningful time at home than to cook a nourishing meal for 20 lovely moms and moms-to-be at Casa Teresa?

Temple Beth Sholom is proud to offer this mitzvah opportunity the first Sunday of every month from January to June. We invite you to cook your family favorite or a new recipe you have been anxious to try. Food items will be available from Mary's Kitchen for **FREE** if you need. Call Gloria at (714) 633-0444 to reserve ingredients. Available supplies include beef, lamb, chicken or ground beef, fresh vegetables, potatoes, and fruit. Gloria will package items and have it waiting for you at Mary's Kitchen (517 W. Struck Ave., Orange). TBS also has pasta, rice, and other canned goods in the Mitzvah Meal pantry if you need. Of course, nourishing is the key word for these moms and their babies. The menu should consist of a minimum of ¼ pound of protein per person (20), a vegetable, a starch, and a fruit/dessert. Casa Teresa requests food be dropped off by 5:00 p.m. if it is ready to serve and by 4:00 p.m. if it needs to be reheated.

Please call Steffanie Belasco at (714) 420-5320 or Monica Engel (949) 458-8732 to sign up and for more information.

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

This newsletter is made possible entirely from donations and sponsorships. If you would like to contribute toward its continued development and distribution, please contact Ruth Aptaker (ruth.aptaker@gmail.com) or the TBS office.

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We are also grateful for the generous donations of Patti Widdicombe, the Weissberg Family, the Cohen Family, the Engel Family, Sandy Fainbarg, and our TBS Brotherhood.

Adult Education

Angela Holmes, Adult Ed Chair

Windows in the Sanctuary - Looking Through the Windows of the Past and Future

Through the generosity of Linda and Dan Weissberg, Steve Klein and Richard Parrish were commissioned to create Jewish archeological images in the glass windows of the TBS sanctuary. Historic synagogues were chosen to trace the Diaspora from the destruction of the second temple in Jerusalem to the present in America. The journey goes from Galilee to Africa, to Europe and America. Each month, a short history of one synagogue will be highlighted in this newsletter with information on sources that can help you to connect virtually with that Temple.



This Month's Window: Touro Synagogue

Located in Newport Rhode Island, this synagogue is also known as the Congregation Jeshuat Israel. This is the oldest synagogue building in the United States and the only synagogue of the Colonial era. The earliest known Jewish settlers arrived there from Barbados in the 17th century. They were of Spanish and Portuguese origin. The migration pattern of their ancestors was from Amsterdam and London to Brazil, and then the Caribbean. In Newport they formed a congregation called Nephuse Israel and the members were all Sephardic Jews. In 1946 this synagogue was declared a national Historic site. Learn more about the Touro Synagogue from Wikipedia and take the virtual tour at <https://www.tourosynagogue.org/>.

70th Annual Jewish Book Awards

Watch the virtual presentation of the 2020 National Jewish Book winners announced on **April 12 at 7:00 p.m. EST**. Here are a few of the winners:

Book of the Year: *Morality* by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks and *The Art of the Jewish Family: A History of Jewish Women in Early New York* by Laura Arnold Liebman

Fiction Award: *Apeirgon* by Colum Mc Cann and *The Lost Shtetl* by Max Gross

Family Award for Food Writing and Cookbooks: *Now for Something Sweet* by Jane and Stuart Weitzman

Other award titles are the Holocaust Award, Biography Award, Children's books awards Children's Picture Books Award, Young Adult Award and Middle Grade Literature Award and more. For additional information go to Jewishbookcouncil.org. To attend the awards, go to National Jewish Book Awards Virtual Celebration.

Resources

A Capella Books in Atlanta Georgia – See new, used, rare music titles, book clubs, and virtual events on a wide range of current topics and authors. Most events are hosted through the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta.

Barnes and Noble - offers virtual Story Time. Go to their website site for helpful babysitting support!

Adults Reading to/with Children – Focus on Shabbat

Note: These stories can be read to younger children, depending on their attention span. As you read, have them look at the picture and if they are able, turn the pages for you.

Shabbat is Coming by Tracy Newman (4-5)

The Shabbat Princess by Amy Meltzer (4-8)

The Challah That Took Over the House by Melissa Berg (6-12)

Shh...Shh...Shabbat by Linda Eloritz Marshal (4-5)

Where Shabbat Plays by Jan Golden Fabiyi (4-5)

Lunch & Learn Series: “Sexy Scriptures”- How the Bible Deals with Sex and Mixed Dancing

If our Hebrew Bible deals with real people in a real world, then it stands to reason that our familiar biblical personalities led real lives. Unlike the stories that you learned in Religious School, our scriptures contain many tales that are rated “R” — definitely not for children! In this four-session series we will take a look (sometimes blushing, sometimes laughing) at some of the more “interesting” texts from our biblical tradition. So, bring out your lunch, turn on the computer and enjoy some fun learning with Rabbi Donnell.

Session #4 | March 17 @ Noon - “Samson and Delilah Get Kinky” - Delilah did much more than give Samson a haircut! How much more????

Sephardic Lecture Series

Mark your calendars for this 3-month lecture series by Rabbi Donnell held at 7:00 p.m. on the following dates. Zoom information to follow.

April 14 – “The Song of the Sephardim” A celebration of the music, history, and folklore of the Ladino culture.

May 12 – “Dona Gracia Mendes- The Queen of the Jews” A converso, Sephardic woman inherits her husband’s wealth created an empire during the Ottoman Empire.

June (Day is TBD) – “The Jewish Conquistador” The story of Louis de Carvajal and his family in the 16th century and the role of the Inquisition.

Reminders

92nd Street Y offers a huge variety of resources for a range of ages and many are free at <https://www.92y.org/>. Also, Orange County Community Scholar Program at <https://occsp.net/> has great monthly offerings. TBS is a member! Please keep current with the TBS calendar and Shavu’on to see all the offerings from Adult Ed, Brotherhood, Sisterhood, and Social Action.