

# FROM YOUR RABBI: <a href="https://chanukah?christmas?the">CHANUKAH? CHRISTMAS? THE DECEMBER DILEMMA</a>

"What would Tevye do?"

Tevye the Milkman, the beloved character created by Yiddish author Sholem Aleichem in 1894, had many dilemmas in his life. He had six daughters (only five in the 1971 movie) and often looked skyward to God to find the answers to his questions. Should Tzeitel be allowed to marry the tailor instead of her arranged groom, the butcher? Should he allow Hodel to leave for Siberia with her beloved Perchik? Tough decisions, but with a prayer here, and a dream there, his problems are solved. But when Chavah decides to marry Fyedka, a Russian Orthodox man, tradition takes hold and he says Kaddish for his beloved third daughter, and refuses to even look at her because of her decision.



Even today, for us, life is still "as precarious as a fiddler on the roof". We do our best when we raise our children, and try to instill in them the values we wish they espouse, but often our dreams for them are not the same dreams they have for themselves. In some families in Jewish Harrisburg, intermarriage is not only frowned upon, but cannot be tolerated. In others, the families plead with their children to marry Jews, but often, in the end, decide they would rather hold their future grandchildren than disown their sons or daughters. Other families tell their children of their expectations, and shrug their shoulders when intermarriage takes place, and call me in the hopes that I can convince the non-Jewish partner to raise any children as Jews. And for others, it is not a problem at all. Yes...life is as precarious as a fiddler on the roof for Jews in the 21stcentury, as well as those who lived in 19thcentury Anatevka in the Ukraine, the village where Tevye was the milkman.

So what do we do when December rolls around, and families, interfaith and not, are bombarded with the Christmas reminders that began even before Halloween? Do we succumb to the advertisers that scream to us to buy our gifts early, do we concentrate on the true meaning of this American institution called "Christmas", do we ignore the countless wreaths and decorations we see everywhere, or do we do our best to educate our families about our own vision of December and what is important to take from the "holiday season"?

Of course, I believe in the last suggestion. I have an easy time explaining Chanukah, and telling the families at Ohev Sholom how to observe the Festival of Lights, but when it comes to Christmas and interfaith family celebrations, I must leave that up to the families themselves. Each interfaith family has a different tradition and it is my role to respect them all. I don't judge, I don't lecture, and I don't offer an opinion. It's my obligation to create Jewish families and not my obligation to tell them if it's OK to buy a Christmas tree, go to church with grandma and grandpa, or open presents that are wrapped with red and green paper with Santa, rather than blue and white paper with stars.

Every year, more and more parents are told by their children that they have chosen a spouse that is not a Jew. For some, the news is heartbreaking. For others, it's not a problem at all. But we need to remember that our children are always our children and the days of saying Kaddish or telling our spouses that dead relatives came to us in a dream saying the marriage was OK are over. Decisions need to be made, and in my mind, the only decision is one that begins with understating, love, and guidance.

I often say that Ohev Sholom is blessed by the non-Jewish parents who choose to raise their children in a faith other than their own, and I mean that with all of my heart. The non-Jewish members of these interfaith families are our partners in keeping Judaism alive. The dilemma we face is how we handle the news that the world is changing before our eyes, and weddings between two Jews are the exception rather than the rule in most American Jewish communities. How do we face that dilemma? That decision is one I must leave up to the families themselves. For some, it's a "no-brainer"...for others, it's a decision as precarious as a fiddler on the roof.

May we all be blessed as we celebrate our December holidays.

Your	Rabbi,
Peter	· Kessler

#### **SIGN UP FOR THE E-BULLETIN**

Please let Michelle Darr know if you are willing to receive future issues of the bulletin electronically. Doing so will help both the temple budget and the environment. If you change your mind later, we would be happy to re-subscribe you to the hard copy, no questions asked. Thank you in advance!

#### March of the Living Scholarships available through the Jewish Community Foundation of Central PA Gesher L'Machar Fund

In spring of 2022, the International March of the Living (MOTL) will again gather thousands of Jewish teens from around the world to Poland and Israel to study the history of the Holocaust and to examine the roots of prejudice, intolerance and hatred. Taking place annually, the March of the Living itself is a 5-kilometer walk from Auschwitz to Birkenau as a tribute to all victims of the Holocaust. March of the Living is a two-week journey where you will experience exhilarating and memorable moments. This experience will bring a range of emotions that you will share with Jews from across the world. It will leave you feeling proud of your Jewish identity.

Does this opportunity sound too good to miss? Unsure if you can afford the cost of the program? The Jewish Community Foundation (JCF) is here to help! Thanks to the generosity of Linda Schawb and Lois Lehrman Grass, the JCF Gesher L'Machar Fund, was created in 2001. Its purpose is to provide needs-based scholarships for high school seniors who seek financial support in order to participate in MOTL. It ensures that those who otherwise may not be able to attend, have the opportunity.

To be considered, you must apply through the JCF website, <u>www.pajewishendowment.org</u>

Deadline for application submission is Friday, December 3, 2021 at 4 PM. No exceptions.



You will be required to provide the following:

- Basic personal information
- · Other organizations you approached for scholarships
- A brief description of your Jewish education
- Any honors/awards you have received
- Extenuating circumstances that should be considered
- Your personal statement about why you want to participate in MOTL
- A letter of recommendation from an educator or community leader

Sababa/Hebrew High Participants will receive preferential consideration.

If the applicant participates in BBYO, the applicant must apply to BBYO for a scholarship prior to this application.

If you are a member of a synagogue, you must contact your rabbi to request financial assistance prior to submitting this application. Advise your rabbi of the deadline for submission and request they provide a letter with the following information:

- · Name of applicant
- · Amount of scholarship
- The money is for the applicant to participate in the MOTL program
- · The year the applicant plans to participate

Combined scholarships will not exceed the amount of the total cost of MOTL.  $% \label{eq:model}$ 



Gesher L' Machar scholarships will be awarded based upon financial need, leadership, volunteerism, commitment to Jewish values, and more.

Applications will be reviewed by the committee and award notices will be sent out.

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Committee decisions are final.

Questions about scholarship applications can be sent to Paulette Keifer at <u>Paulette.keifer@pajewishendowment.org</u> or mobile (904) 307-2413.

For website technical questions contact Billie Jo Lake at billiejo@pajewishendowment.org.



#### TRIP PLANNING TRAINING SCHEDULE THROUGH JFGH

The Jewish Federation of Greater Harrisburg (JFGH) will once again be offering the March of the Living training to local Jewish high school seniors. The March of the Living preparatory course will begin on Sunday, January 9, 2022 at 1 pm at the JCC and will continue to meet weekly.

For more information about the training details above contact Jenna Rappaport at: <a href="mailto:irappaport@jewishfedhbg.org">irappaport@jewishfedhbg.org</a>.

## IMPORTANT TRIP/FINANCIAL & OTHER DETAILS for March of the Living, 2022:

Dates April 24-May 8, 2022.

Prices from JFK Airport April 24:

Teens & Staff \$5,695 and Adults \$5,895 (double occupancy).

MOTL requires International Travel Health Insurance.

Strongly recommend Travel Cancellation Insurance.

Participants are responsible for costs associated with pre-trip COVID testing, a minimal 72 hour test.

The International March of the Living will cover the cost and arrange for the necessary Covid-19 tests required by Poland and Israel for entry and exit.

#### **Individual Cancellation Policy**

January 1, 2022 - January 31 2022 – 80% returned
February 1, 2022 - February 28, 2022 – 60% returned
March 1, 2022 - March 20, 2022 – 40% returned
After March 20, 2022 – NO return

For more information about the trip details above contact Jenna Rappaport at: j.rappaport@jewishfedhbg.org.



# ADULT ED CLASSES FOR DECEMBER

# Contact Rabbi Kessler on the Temple Web-Site if you would like to be on the ZOOM link e-mail list

**PEP** is the Parallel Education Course taught once-a-month on Sunday mornings. Our next class is December 5th at 11 AM.

**Book Review** is our monthly Sunday morning book club. Our next class is December 12 at 11am.

Lunch-n-Learn is on 2nd Wednesday of the month. We meet at 12 noon.

Confirmation Class will be held on December 19th at 10am.

# Service Schedule for Late December/January

We are happy to announce that we will have joint services with our friends at Beth El in late December and January!

December 24th 6:00 PM at Beth El

December 31st 6:00 PM at Ohev Sholom

January 7th 6:00 PM at Ohev Sholom

January 14th 6:00 PM at Beth El

January 21st 6:00 PM at Beth El

January 28th 6:00 PM at Ohev Sholom

# SISTERHOOD NEWS

I hope everyone had a very nice Thanksgiving. Sisterhood was very busy in October and November. On Sunday morning, October 31st, we had a very successful Mini-Mitzvah Day with the 7th grade religious school class. A big thank you to those who volunteered to make bagged lunches for Downtown Daily Bread. Kudos also to members of the congregation and the community for donating toiletries for our Toiletry Drive for Downtown Daily Bread. We also designed get well and thank you cards for veterans who are patients at the VA Hospital in Lebanon. Thank you to the Steven M. Harpster Tikkun Olam Fund for their reimbursement for the groceries for the bagged lunches and again thank you to all the volunteers.

Thursday, November 4th was Sisterhood's Symons/Rose Book Review. Sisterhood welcomed author Ronald Balson, via Zoom, to speak about his novel, Eli's Promise. It was a wonderful book to read and Mr. Balson did a great job explaining his book. Thank you to the Symons/Rose families for their generous sponsorship of this annual program.

Torah Talk (formally Soup and Study) took place on Friday evening, Nov. 12th immediately following the 6:00pm Shabbat Service. It felt great to be back at the temple participating in a program! No problem if you were unable to come to temple, the program was also live-streamed. Thank you to Rabbi Kessler for agreeing to do Torah Talk and lead a discussion on Family Relationships in the Book of Genesis.

Hanukkah is very early this year. Sisterhood's Virtual Hanukkah Celebration will take place on Tuesday evening, November 30th at 7:00pm. We are looking forward to Rabbi Kessler leading us in lighting the candles, Jason Graf, religious school director, reading a Hanukkah story and, of course, Hanukkah trivia! I am sure it will be a fun-filled program and we hope many people will attend. I will write more about the program in the January Bulletin.:)

It isn't too early to mark your calendars for Sisterhood's Winter Social, Saturday evening January 22nd. We are planning a Paint Night in the Social Hall! We are so excited about this program and we hope you will join us. As per the temple's policy, we can only have 40 people attend, so as the saying goes first come first serve. More information to follow in the coming weeks, but please see the teaser flyer in the bulletin.

If you have any questions about upcoming events or about Sisterhood, please feel free to email me at rmjose32@comcast.net or give me a call at 717 379-0674.

Wishing all a Happy Hanukkah and to our members who celebrate Christmas, a Merry Christmas and I hope everyone has a happy and healthy New Year.

Reyna Jose

**President** 

# A Message of Thanks From Downtown Daily Bread

Hello,

We received the donations from Ohev Sholom and they are phenomenal! You guys are amazing! Please pass on our sincerest thanks to all those involved. Between this donation and the lunches over the weekend, you guys have been awesome! We hope to continue working with you in the future.

Thank you!

Lisa Lancour-Peterson

Administrative Assistant, Downtown Daily Bread

llancourpeterson@pinestreet.org

# Learn About the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

For more than six decades, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (the RAC) has worked to educate, inspire, and mobilize the Reform Jewish community to advocate for social justice. RAC mobilizes around federal, state, provincial, and local legislation on more than 70 pressing socioeconomic issues, including gun violence prevention, immigration, reproductive rights, and criminal justice reform.

RAC is part of a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and therefore its work is nonpartisan. RAC has state affiliates and RAC-PA is the newest state affiliate. RAC-PA is focused on redistricting, defending voting rights and getting the vote out.

If you are interested in learning more about RAC-PA you can visit their website at <a href="https://rac.org/take-action/rac-your-state/rac-pa">https://rac.org/take-action/rac-your-state/rac-pa</a>

Hanukah celebrations have been happening here for years...

# Light an eternal flame with a gift through your will to Temple Ohev Sholom...





...and keep the lights shining bright for generations to come. Sign your letter of intent today!

For more information about leaving your legacy please contact Temple Ohev Sholom at: 717-233-6459 or office@ohevsholom.org

The Jewish Community Foundation of Central PA is sponsoring and presenting the community wide legacy initiative.





# Temple Ohev Sholom Sisterhood Winter Social Paint Night



Saturday, January 22, 2021 7:00 p.m.

Temple Ohev Sholom Social Hall

Cost: \$40 - Includes Painting Materials
Artist Fee

This program will be in person, so we are limited to 40 attendees with the guidelines set up by the temple board. All attendees will need to wear masks during the entirety of the event.

Registration information will be provided closer to the program date. Be ready to sign up right away.

If you have questions, contact
Patti Hivner at pattiscookin@comcast.net or
Miriam Robinson at chutzy1@yahoo.com.

## The Flower Fund



Are you celebrating a birthday, an anniversary, birth of a child/grandchild, etc.?

Or are you commemorating a loved one's yahrzeit? You can make a donation to the Flower Fund in your name or your loved one's name?

You may send a check made out to T.O.S.S. Flower Fund and mail to:

Fran Casher 4513 Lakeside Drive Harrisburg, Pa 17110

# **DECEMBER KADDISH**

### **December 3**

Louis Adler **Albert Bryant** Harry Chernicoff Ilse Feldhiem J. Helen Goldberg John Goldsmith Rosa M. Goldsmith Joseph Goldstein Etta J. Goodman **Bill Gross Ida Gross** Abraham A. Jaffe Margaret W. Kohn **Barry Krause** Charles Laubheim Diana Maglin **Edward Maglin** Milton Ring Roselle Roth Frank L. Rubin Rheda Rubin Saxe Shirley S.

Schneiderman

Sally Aronson Yoffee

Abe Yamin

## December 10

Milton S. Abel Robert Baum Sam Begler Jeffrey Cohen Reuben Ettinger Jay Feldman Martin L. Finkelstein Herbert Galowitz Clara Goodman **Dorothy Sweedler** Hess Andrea Huggard Anita Jaffe Goldie Kassnar Carol Kaye Melvin J. Levine Elmer H. Miller Norman Neiman Trudi Pepper Carolyn Schwartz Jerry Schwarz Richard Zarin

## December 17

Melvin Asher Phyllis Bagley Harry Becker Florence Berger Michael Brenner Minnie D. Bryant Grace S. Buxbaum Sylvia Casher Harvey Danowitz Abe Epstein Michael P. Feldser Peter Flack Myer Gross Ken Hess Sue Hoffman Israel Kades Shirley Klawansky Martha Lehrman Moe Mishkin Joseph E. Morris Leroy M. Shellhammer Bernard Zeliger Natalie Zisman

Lila Zlotoff

## December 24

Ida G. Abraham

Matilda Arch

Myra Bornstein

Lois Braden

Helene Cohen

Kay Dupont

Nap Epstein

Beth Fine

Minnie Gordon

Louis C. Jacobs

Seth Jacobs

Robert Ketchem

Blanche Krauss

Harry S. Lasker

Abe May

Phillip Menaker

Saul Migatz

Bessie B. Miller Jay Prensky

Caroline Schultz

Morrie Schwab

Jean Sensel

Clarabelle Sharosky

Lucille Spotts

Morris S. Yoffee

## December 31

Franklin Abel

Bowman A. Brown Jr

Beatrice K. Clymin

Max Garner

M. Lee Goldsmith

Irwin I. Grossman

Jack Klawansky
Joseph Klein

Bernhardt Kramer

Moses Landis

David Lang

Irving Levine Henrietta H. Mayer

Bernard Rosenstrauch

Max Salkin

Elaine Simons

William Moss Strouse

Harry Yablonowitz

TEMPLE OHEV SHOLOM 2345 N. FRONT ST HARRISBURG PA 17110

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED