

Temple Beth El_{ectronic} News

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Kislev 5769

December 2008 (#1)

Thank You

To Rebecca Gottlieb and to Barb Alexander for putting together such a lovely lay service! And thanks to everyone who participated. Wonderful evening.

From the Local....

On Friday, November 14, our community was visited by Andy Muchin, a Wisconsin-based journalist, researcher, and lecturer who writes about Jewish culture, communities, and history for national Jewish publications such as the *Forward* and *The Jewish Journal*. The Director of the Wisconsin Small Jewish Communities History Project—a research and preservation effort sponsored by the Wisconsin Society for Jewish Learning--Muchin recently produced “Chosen Towns,” a documentary on the Jews in Wisconsin’s small communities, which aired on Wisconsin public television. Andy came to Dubuque to view the Alexander Levi exhibit and do research for an upcoming article on the Jews of Dubuque. While in our corner of the world, Andy attended our Friday lay service. He also interviewed the Landaus about life in Shullsburg, Frank and Susan Farber about the history of the Dubuque Jewish community, Karin Pritikin about the exhibit, and had the opportunity to speak to congregation members. (We look forward to seeing what Andy “cooks up.”)

On November 23rd and 24th, we were visited by Janice Rosenberg, President of the Board of Directors of the Iowa Jewish Historical Society; Sandi Yoder, their Interim Director who is also Treasurer of the Iowa Museum Association, and two IJHS Board members, Susan Seidenfeld and Heidi Moskowitz. They traveled to Dubuque to see the Levi exhibit and expressed strong interest in moving the exhibit to Des Moines. We’re discussing expanding the exhibit content by adding artifacts from the IJHS collection along with interviews of Beth El members and an additional film for children, and opening the exhibit at the Iowa State Historical Museum in Des Moines in September 2009.

On another note, Karin was asked by Emily Grotta, Director of Marketing & Communications for the URJ, to write an extended blog post on the exhibit and the Jewish family reunion for [RJ.org](http://www.rj.org), the website for “news and views of reform Jews.” Look for the post in early December at: <http://www.rj.org>

...To the World Stage (From the Religious Action Center of the URJ)

We are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life in Mumbai during this week’s terror attacks. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those killed and wounded. While the loss of any innocent life to terrorist violence is reprehensible, for us as American Jews, the targeting of Jews, Americans and Britons touches us in deep personal ways. Yet though these three groups were singled out by the terrorists, the loss of life among people of many nationalities and faiths makes clear that the wickedness of terrorism knows no boundaries.... (For the complete statement, visit http://rac.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=3136&pge_prq_id=10768)

Oneg, Rabbi Dinner, and Adult Study Hosts

To host an oneg, contact Fern Reinstein (threeamstamper@yahoo.com)

To host a rabbi dinner, contact Cindy Mikel (mikelcinkc@aol.com)

To host an adult study, contact Rina Sirk (rinadbq@aol.com)

Mitzvah Opportunity—Save the Date

Once again, Temple Beth El is going to volunteer at "Reflections in the Park" on December 24. This mitzvah brings us great community recognition and helps Hillcrest family services. Without our help, they would probably have to close the light show on one of the top money-raising evenings of the year. Rebecca Gottlieb is our temple organizer for this event. Contact Rebecca at gottlieb@uwplatt.edu for more information or to volunteer.

Debbie Friedman Concert!

December 14, 2008 at 4:30 pm at Valley High School in West Des Moines.

Tickets are available now from Jewish Federation. \$100 patron tickets; \$36 reserved seating;

Adult General Admission tickets purchased by December 1 are \$18.

After December 1, Adult General Admission tickets are \$25 at the door or from Jewish Federation. Tickets for students: \$18; children: \$8.

For tickets, call 515 277-6321 x 218.

Debbie Friedman is quite simply the most honored, beloved, and widely performed of all living composers of contemporary Jewish synagogue music. Concert sponsored by Temple B'nai Jeshurun, and co-sponsored by Tifereth Israel Synagogue, The Charles Steinger Memorial Lecture Fund, The Louis and Rebecca Nussbaum Adult Lecture Fund, and The Caspe Terrace Programming Committee of the Jewish Federation

From Rabbi Stephanie

My favorite holiday" is a superlative one often hears describing Thanksgiving. Whether you most look forward to the abundant food on the table, the family gathered around it, or the football competing for attention on TV, there is indeed much to warrant favor for this annual tradition. And though it is not of course a *JEW*ish holiday—one marked with fixed regularity on the Hebrew calendar—it might be considered a *JewISH* holiday in that it emphasizes one of the most common threads in all of Jewish observance: giving thanks.

From the prayer we say upon waking in the morning...

My God, the soul you have given me is pure. You created it, You shaped it, You breathed it into me and You protect it within me. For as long as my soul is within me, I offer thanks to You, Adonai, my God and God of my ancestors, Source of all creation, Sovereign of all souls. Praised are You, Adonai, in whose hand is every living soul and the breath of humankind.

...to the prayer recited in every evening service...

We acknowledge with thanks that You are Adonai, our God and the God of our ancestors forever. You are the Rock of our lives, and the Shield of our salvation in every generation. Let us thank You and praise You—for our lives which are in Your hand, for our souls which are in Your care, for Your miracles that we experience every day and for Your wondrous deeds and favors at every time of day: evening, morning and noon. O Good One, whose mercies never end, O Compassionate One, whose kindness never

fails, we forever put our hope in You. For all these things, O Sovereign, let Your Name be forever praised and blessed. O God, our Redeemer and Helper, let all who live affirm You and praise Your Name in truth. Blessed are You, Adonai, Your Name is Goodness, and You are worthy of thanksgiving.

...Jewish observance and prayer is essentially a long and heartfelt ode of thanks to our Creator, the Source of the many blessings in our lives.

So in that sense I wish everyone not only a Happy Thanksgiving, but a Chag Sameach, as well!

With all best wishes –
L'shalom,
Rabbi Stephanie M. Alexander

Upcoming Activities

- **Friday, December 5th, 7:00 @ temple – Musical Oneg Shabbat**
Following Shabbat services, Larry Goldberg and his clarinet instructor, Micki Marlof, will help add joy to our Oneg celebration by sharing their musical talents. Thank you, Larry, for arranging this treat!
- **Saturday, December 6th, 12:00 pm @ temple – The Great Kugel Cook-off!**
That's right, a kugel cook-off! Think you have a fantastic kugel recipe? When you serve it are guests always asking for more? Or perhaps there's a kugel recipe you've always wanted to try. A noodle kugel? Potato kugel? Farfel kugel? Well, here's your chance.

The rules:

Bring your kugel to the temple *already cooked* (the oven will be available for re-heating only); use a disposable cooking tin so all entrants look the same; and bring copies of your recipe to share. A guest "celebrity" judge will do the official judging, but all in attendance will have the chance to sample. It promises to be a fun, and yummy, afternoon.

To register for this program, please email me ASAP at stephalex75@msn.com. (Note: While many of you told me at previous visits that you were excited to participate, I still need you to send me an email so I don't forget anyone. Thank you!)

- **Saturday, December 6th, 7:00 pm @ the home of Barb and Dick Alexander: Adult Study**
After we say goodbye to Shabbat with Havdalah, our topic this Saturday night will be **Reform Judaism and same-sex marriage**. Where does the movement stand on ballot initiatives to ban same-sex marriage? Can Reform rabbis officiate at same-sex wedding ceremonies? Are they? Would the ceremony look the same as that performed for a man and woman? With CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis) resolutions and responses as our guide, we'll navigate these important and challenging questions facing the movement today.



Service and Mitzvah Schedule for 5769

(Updated 11-30-08)

NOTES:

- Rabbi Stephanie has brought a new dimension to our temple by offering a slew of activities on the weekends she is here. The schedule below does NOT include those specific activities. Refer to each newsletter for the specifics of an upcoming weekend.

Friday, December 5...7:00pm Shabbat service	dinner: Sirk, oneg Silverberg
Saturday, December 6...7:00pm adult study	dinner: TBD, study: Alexander
Friday, December 19...6:00pm Hanukkah Service	(dinner hosted by Ruthie Silverberg & Randy Sirk with menorah lighting to follow)
Saturday, December 20...7:00pm adult study	dinner: Gottlieb, study: Rudin
Wednesday, December 24...REFLECTIONS IN THE PARK	
Friday, January 9, 2009...7:00pm Shabbat service	dinner: Goldberg-Scheinman, oneg: Ruetten
Saturday, January 10...7:00pm adult study	dinner: TBD, study: TBD
Friday, January 30...7:00pm Lay Shabbat service	oneg: Goldberg-Scheinman
Friday, February 13...7:00pm Shabbat service	dinner: Mikel & Pearce, oneg: Garfield
Saturday, February 14...7:00pm adult study	dinner: TBD, study: TBD
Friday, March 6...6:00pm Purim service with dinner to follow	(need a Purim Dinner host)
Saturday, March 7...7:00pm adult study	dinner: TBD, study: TBD
Friday, April 3... Passover and Visitors' Service.	Details for the weekend to follow
Saturday, April 4...7:00pm adult study?	dinner: TBD, study: TBD
Friday, April 24...7:00pm Lay Shabbat service	oneg: Aidenbaum
Spring Congregational Meeting—Details to follow	
Friday, May 8... 7:00pm Shabbat service	dinner: TBD oneg: Dyrke
Saturday, May 9...7:00pm adult study	dinner: Dyrke, study: TBD
Friday, June 5...7:00pm Shabbat service	dinner: TBD, oneg: Alexander
Saturday, June 6... time TBD	End-of-Year Adult Social hosted by the Alexanders