

Temple Beth El^{Electronic} News

Visit our temple website at <http://www.templebe.org>

Shevat 5769

February 2009

Thank You

- To Rebecca Gottlieb for organizing and leading our recent Lay Service. As always, Becca did an amazing job! Thanks also to everyone who participated in the service. We are a small community and everyone's participation is meaningful and energizing.
- To the Jewish Federation of Des Moines who recently send us a large donation to help off-set the cost of the repairs from the flood damage we sustained. It is comforting to know that the larger Jewish Community is there to offer us help and support.

Mitzvah Opportunity—Save the Date

Temple Beth El and the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship will be serving a meal at the Dubuque Rescue Mission on Sunday, April 5. More details to follow, but put the date on your calendars.

Purim

Jacquie Dyrke and her daughter, Lisa, will be hosting our upcoming Purim dinner (on Friday, March 6). They will be serving a vegetarian pasta dish and would like the rest of us to bring salads and desserts.

In case of inclement weather

In case of bad weather, the outgoing message on the Temple's answering machine will reflect any cancellation of a service. If you have a question about services taking place please call the Temple. Even if Rabbi Stephanie is unable to get to town, it is possible that the Worship Committee will be holding a Lay Service.

From Rabbi Stephanie

I have lived in Cedar Rapids for more than four and a half years now, and still I cannot get used to this cold. It is unbelievably cold. Skin-cracking, spectacle-freezing, bone-chilling cold. But I don't have to tell any of you that. Most of you have endured the winters of the upper Midwest far longer than I – and for that you have my deep admiration.

Yet would you believe that *Shevat*, the Hebrew month which began on January 26th, is known as a month of hope – not in spite of the weather, rather because of it? You see, in Israel, *Shevat* is the month when the winter rains typically draw to a close, new fruits begin to bud on trees, and the first signals of spring reveal themselves all around. Among those first signs – the blossoming almond trees, for whom *Shevat* is a particularly important month.

On the fifteenth day of the month, *Tu* in Hebrew and hence *Tu B'Shevat*, we celebrate the New Year of the trees (one of four new years ordained in the Bible). Originally a legal creation for the purpose of counting the age of a tree, the minor festival has since been imbued with a wide variety of meanings from a celebration of nature to the embracing of environmentalism. It has become a time for planting trees (or raising money to plant trees in Israel), eating fruits of trees, and saying prayers for trees – particularly the special prayer said when we see the first buds of spring: “Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, who has not withheld anything from the world, who created in it wonderful creatures and good trees for people to enjoy.”

We may be a ways off from seeing buds here at home, so more than every may our hearts be in the East, in Israel. Take a moment this month to eat a special fruit from a tree – perhaps something you have never tried before or something that's been imported from Israel, or even a handful of nutty almonds. And know that our time, too, will come. We will see those first buds of spring and we too will have the chance to declare the greatness manifest in the world's “wonderful creatures and good trees for people to enjoy.”

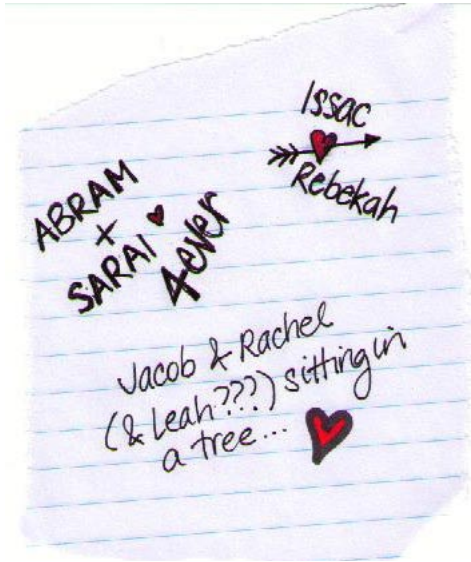
L'shalom,
Rabbi Stephanie M. Alexander

Upcoming Activities

- **Saturday, February 14th, 3:00 pm @ temple – Afternoon Discussion: Approaches to Interfaith Worship**

There are many settings in which we, as individuals and a congregation, engage in interfaith worship – from organized Thanksgiving services and community-wide peace vigils, to public invocations and impromptu blessings. What are the appropriate parameters for such worship? Does “interfaith” have to mean all faiths? Is there room for uniquely Christian, Jewish, Muslim devotion in such a setting? These questions, posed by our own members, are certainly food for thought for all. Saturday afternoon we'll reflect upon these situations and more and evaluate different interfaith models.

- Saturday, February 14th, 7:00 pm @ the Garfields' home – Adult Study



The Matriarchs and Patriarchs: A Love Story?

Was it love at first sight for Abram (later Abraham) and Sarai (later Sarah)? What about the handmaiden, Hagar, Sarah gave to Abraham by which to conceive? How about Abraham's move, not once but twice, to pass Sarah off to another suitor as his sister? Was Rebekah able to capture the attention and interest of otherwise rather passive Isaac? Jacob and Rachel and Leah – how did that arrangement work??

It's a Valentine's Day bible study of which Hallmark would be proud. ☺

On the Horizon...

- Rick Recht is coming to Shabbat Services at Temple Judah in Cedar Rapids on Friday, February 27th. See attached flyer and Rabbi Stephanie for more information.
- Book discussion on Saturday, March 7th – *God Knows*, by Joseph Heller

“Joseph Heller's powerful, wonderfully funny, deeply moving novel is the story of David -- yes, King David -- but as you've never seen him before. You already know David as the legendary warrior king of Israel, husband of Bathsheba, and father of Solomon; now meet David as he really was: the cocky Jewish kid, the plagiarized poet, and the Jewish father. Listen as David tells his own story, a story both relentlessly ancient and surprisingly modern, about growing up and growing old, about men and women, and about man and God. It is quintessential Heller.”



Service and Mitzvah Schedule for 5769

(Updated 02-08-09)

NOTE: Rabbi Stephanie offers 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, February 13...7:00pm Shabbat service	dinner: Mikel & Pearce, oneg: Garfield
Saturday, February 14...7:00pm adult study	dinner: Garfield, study: Randy Sirk
Friday, March 6...6:00pm Purim service with dinner to follow (dinner hosted by Dyrke)	
Saturday, March 7...7:00pm adult study	dinner: Kirk & Gottlieb, study: Gottlieb
Friday, April 3... Passover and Visitors' Service.	dinner: Randy Sirk
Details for the weekend to follow	
Saturday, April 4...7:00pm adult study?	dinner: TBD, study: Garfield
Sunday, April 5 DUBUQUE RESCUE MISSION Meal—details to follow	
Friday, April 24...7:00pm Lay Shabbat service	oneg: Aidenbaum
Spring Congregational Meeting—Details to follow	
Friday, May 8... 7:00pm Shabbat service	dinner: Reinstein, 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

rickrecht

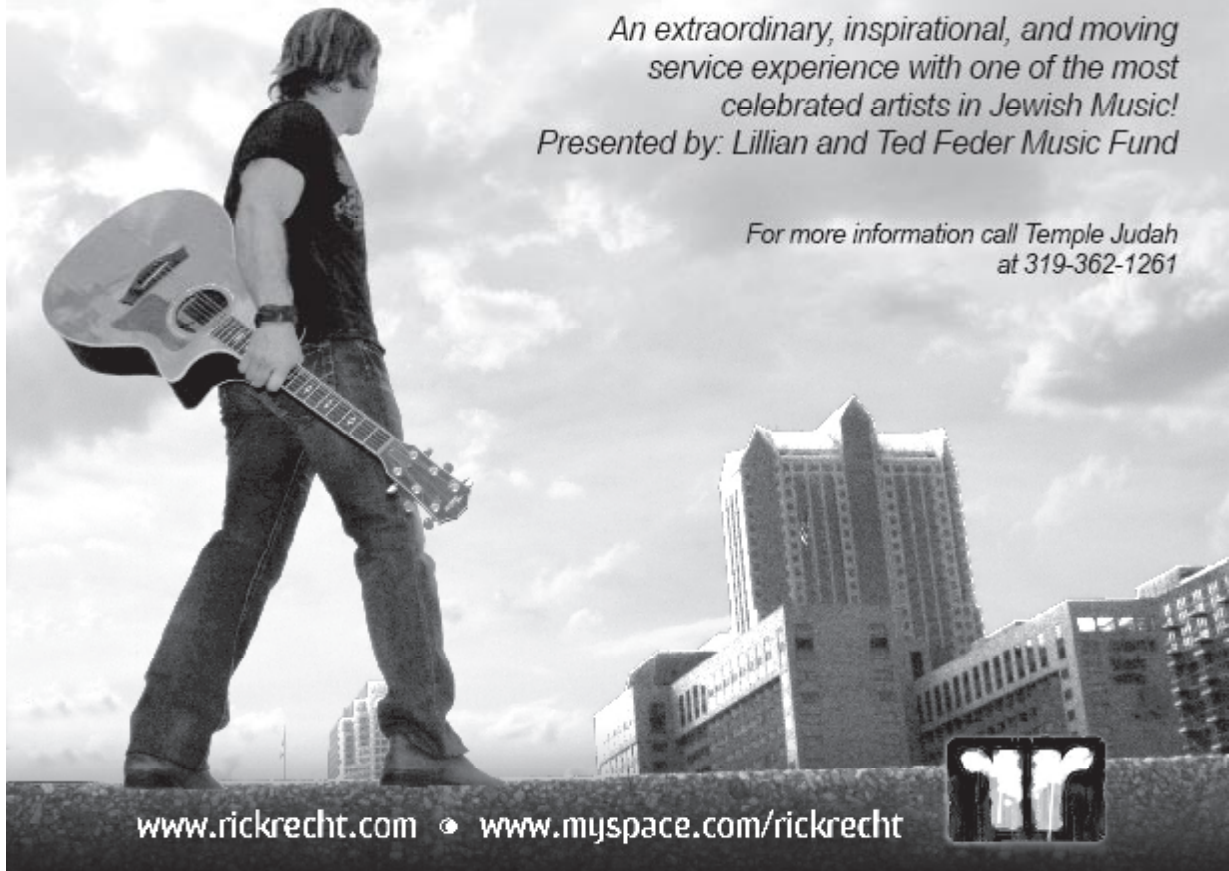
February 27, 2009 • 7:30 PM

Shabbat Alive!

Temple Judah
3221 Lindsay Lane SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403

*An extraordinary, inspirational, and moving
service experience with one of the most
celebrated artists in Jewish Music!*
Presented by: Lillian and Ted Feder Music Fund

*For more information call Temple Judah
at 319-362-1261*



www.rickrecht.com • www.myspace.com/rickrecht

