

Temple Beth Torah

July 2020 Bulletin

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RABBI'S MESSAGE

The Upcoming Month of Av

Shalom. Yes, it has been over three months since we have been able to gather inside the synagogue together. During that time, a lot has happened in our area and in the world. The big news, of course, is that the COVID-19, Coronavirus issue is still with us. Faith communities especially, are struggling to be able to provide appropriate support remotely. Temple Beth Torah, like all houses of worship, are trying to figure out how we can fulfill our primary mission while keeping people feeling safe, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We expect that this situation is temporary. At the same time, while making our plans, we know that some things will need to be different to ensure the safety of all.

OUR temple, Temple Beth Torah, is still with us. With the help of dedicated volunteers, TBT will re-open when the time is right. I am reminded of another temple, the Holy Temple of Jerusalem, whose history gives us important lessons. The Temple was the center of Jewish life, and Jewish people made regular pilgrimages for worship, for offering sacrifices and to connect in sacred ways. According to historical and biblical accounts, the First Temple, built by King Solomon, lasted over 400 years before being destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE (Before the Common Era). About 60 years later, the Second Temple was built to replace it and lasted almost 600 years before being destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE (Common Era). Both Temples were destroyed on the same calendar day. The 9th day of the month of Av, or Tish B'Av, is observed annually as a day of fasting in commemoration of the destruction of the Holy Temples. For almost 2,000 years, we have been without that center of Jewish observance.

But we have NOT been idly waiting! After a period of mourning, the Jewish people realized we had to make changes. Temple sacrifice led by Priests could no longer be the standard way of practicing Judaism. Torah learning expanded into the creation of Talmud, volumes of discussions and explanations to help us further explore Jewish identity as it connects with righteous living and treatment of others. Synagogues developed with their own communities, and creative poets composed liturgical prayer, so people did not need a Priest to intervene for them. Prayer and worship became both personal and communal. Learning, discussing and even arguing about the deep meaning of Torah was also a sacred task. In the last 2,000 years, Judaism has grown and developed in countless ways. Much later, in the 19th and 20th centuries, new movements emerged, like Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and others that enabled Jewish people to find their own communities that fit their styles and the ways they personally connected to Judaism. We continue to learn in new ways to adapt to new times. The destruction of the Temple became an unexpected catalyst to centuries of discovering new ways to be Jewish.

So, the fact that we are praying and studying together with the help of technology is just another step along the path. Personally, I will always prefer being in the same room together, sharing our voices,

hugs, refreshments, laughter, and fellowship. I expect that our online experiences will help enhance our in-person gatherings. We have already seen the number of participants rise at some of our online programs, as the convenience participating from home can work better for some. It has also been exciting that some of our former members who moved away are able to re-connect from a distance. As we look for new ways to engage, I hope everyone will find his/her comfort spot. THIS IS THE TIME WHEN COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT! PLEASE, continue to connect in any and every way you can...and if you are unsure, give a call.

Those who observe Tish B'Av (July 30 this year) know it is a day of mourning and fasting. And of course, our current situation of quarantine keeps us being with each other. Hopefully, we will find it the catalyst to new, exciting ways to enhance our connections with Judaism and with each other.

L'shalom,

Rabbi Dan Gordon

EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT AT 7:00 pm - Celebrate Shabbat With Rabbi Dan Gordon and your TBT Friends

By clicking on the link under "Join the Zoom Meeting" you will be connected to the TBT service or event. Rabbi Dan Gordon is the host. If you have a camera on your device, we will be able to see you, too, and you're free to turn on or off the video. You will be able to have your microphone muted to eliminate distracting noises that may be in your home, and unmuted when invited by the host. We are having great attendance at our 7pm Shabbat services and our other zoom programs. Don't miss out!!

Celebrate Shabbat each Friday in July at TBT via Zoom:

July 10, 17, 24, 31 7:00 PM Shabbat Service with Rabbi Dan Gordon

Membership Renewals

It's time to renew your membership to Temple Beth Torah! Renewal forms are now due, as our membership year runs from July 1st – June 30th. Current members should have received their membership renewal form by mail. Please contact our membership chair Jeff Kaufman at membership@tbthumble.org if you need a form sent to you. Please return them no later than July 31st. We appreciate everyone's support of TBT!

If you are interested in joining Temple Beth Torah as a member, please contact Jeff Kaufman at membership@tbthumble.org

“Drive By and Drop Off” Donations for FamilyTime and HAAM - Sunday, July 19th from 3:00pm- 4:30pm - at Temple Beth Torah

Help out our community as we collect different supplies and food for FamilyTime, a local organization that serves victims of domestic violence, and Humble Area Assistance Ministries (HAAM), a local social service agency. You can bring your donations to TBT Sunday, July 19th between 3:00pm and 4:30pm drive by, pop your trunk and we will remove your donations and then you keep on moving. Items needed include:

Lysol Spray

Cleaning Wipes

Toilet Paper

Paper Towels

Kitchen Trash Bags (13-gallon size- usually white)

Bleach

Fabuloso Cleaner

Gloves for cleaning (not food service gloves)

Individual Snack items

Nonperishable food

As a thank you we will have some tasty treats from Houston Pecan Company. Leon Cooper, a Holocaust survivor who worked for Oskar Schindler as a teenager, owned Houston Pecan Company. He was also a member of Holocaust Museum Houston and has been to Temple Beth Torah to talk about his experiences as part of our Yom Hashoah observance.

If you would like to contribute but are not able to drop off on July 19th please contact us at spollard@tbthumble.org or hpenn@tbthumble.org or call 281-446-5611 and leave a message.

ARE YOU RECEIVING ALL YOUR EMAILS?

Because new things are happening all the time, you should be receiving at least one email a week with login information about Shabbat and other programs. The Shabbat Zoom will always be the same, but all other programs will have their own information.

Some members have reported that they do not always receive an email. We have learned that sometimes, the email gets diverted to another folder, like SPAM or PROMOTIONS. Please check your other folders, or if you feel you are missing some information, contact admin@tbthumble.org

TBT Reopening Plans

Temple Beth Torah, as well as most synagogues in the Houston area, has been busy putting together an action plan to reopen our synagogue when we feel it will be safe. If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact Jeff Kaufman at membership@tbthumble.org

The Virtual Synagogue

As part of the reopening committee, we are planning to stream services from TBT. If you have some expertise in this area, we would love for you to join this sub-committee. Contact Jeff Kaufman at membership@tbthumble.org

TBT Donate a Brick Campaign:

A wonderful way to honor or remember someone. Please visit the website at www.tbthumble.org to download the form. Celebrate a birth, death, marriage or other mitzvah.

Order Memorial Plaques NOW for High Holidays

Now is the time to place your order for memorial plaques on the wall of the sanctuary. Synagogues all over the country put their orders in over the summer so the plaques will be ready for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. The company that makes the plaques is overwhelmed with hundreds of orders, so please get your order in now if you want the plaque to be here in time.

The cost of the plaque is a minimum \$300 donation, made out to Temple Beth Torah. Once you have sent in the donation, please email rabbidangordon@gmail.com with the following information:

English name as you wish it to appear on the plaque
Hebrew name if known
Date of death

Deadline to place the order, in order for it to be ready by Rosh Hashanah is **July 20, 2020**.

ADULT EDUCATION - TORCH CLASS, Sundays at 10:00 AM

TORCH Rabbi Yaakov Wolbe leads a discussion of **Pirke Avot** (Ethics of the Fathers). All meeting will be through zoom. Below is the link to Zoom. Any questions please contact Dan Kullman at dkullman@tbthumble.org. No class on April 12.

ADULT EDUCATION - BOOK DISCUSSION, Sundays at 11:30 AM

Welcome to an open discussion of our next book, Holy Rascals by Rabbi Rami Shapiro. Please contact Susan Pollard at spollard@tbthumble.org if you have any questions. The Book discussion group will be meeting through zoom. Following is the zoom meeting ID and the link to the meeting. This will be the same link for the Month of April.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL:

Religious School is preparing and hoping to open on September 14th. Parents will be notified by mid-August if we will have classes online, in the building or a combination of the two. For the summer, there are some good sites for Jewish learning such as Akhlah.com, Jewishkids.org, and myjewishlearning.org. Also, for those of you that have Seesaw accounts for elementary age children, there are lots of Jewish themed books on their site. Just go to the search option. In the meantime, read some good books, take some long walks and stay connected with friends and family.

Our ISJL fellow will be Rena Lubin for her second year. I am so excited to have her back with us at TBT. She is already planning innovative virtual lessons for students and how-to in-services for our teachers.

CARRIE KEITH

With Condolences on the Passing of Bea Moss.

The TBT family mourns the loss of Bea Moss, mother of Susan Meinholz. May her memory be a blessing.

Social Justice and Anti-Racism - Comments from TBT's Social Action Committee

With so much happening over the past months we may be wondering how to help and we may be looking for a way to expand our level of awareness about what others are experiencing on a daily basis. While our own experiences inform our awareness, it is not enough. This was made clear to me when I (Susan Pollard) recently heard therapists of color talking about the ways others respond to them and the impact of their ethnicity in their work. They spoke clearly about experiences and considerations that were different from my own. It was eye opening and helpful in increasing my understanding. If you want to expand your knowledge base, below are 2 links from the Woburn, MA school district that have many excellent resources. If you would like to pursue a discussion in more depth please contact Susan at spollard@tbthumb.org. We can watch one of several documentaries or read recommended books and explore them together.

<https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234>

<http://bit.ly/ANTIRACISMRESOURCES>

DONATIONS:

A Big THANK YOU to everyone who sponsored a service or a program:

Hy Penn and Lynn Gordon - Friday night service in honor of Loren Gordon's help with Zoom

Wes Goble - Friday night service in memory of Harold Liss

Craig Gotfried - Friday night service in memory of Irwin Gotfried

Carrie and Dennis Keith - Friday night service in honor of Rabbi Dan Aronson

Mike Stark - Lunctime Learning with Rabbi David Zaslou

Hy Penn and Lynn Gordon - Shabbat afternoon Havdallah concert with Ellie Flier

Anonymous - Friday night service with guest speaker Rabbi Rami Shapiro

If you would like to sponsor a TBT Zoom event in honor of an occasion or in memory of a loved one please contact Jeremy at president@tbthumble.org or Stacey at admin@tbthumble.org.

SIMCHAS IN JULY:

Birthdays

2 Ken Troxclair
3 Miranda Shuman
5 Bernice Troxclair
6 Shari Ellsworth
9 Bruce Pollard
9 Morton Winter
12 Roger Zevallos
18 Mabel Abrasley
19 Iris Kelley
19 Shawna Kullman
23 Maxine Sussman
26 Bob Abrasley
31 Amy Nossal
31 Ellen Grayson

Anniversaries

4 Guillermo and Deysi Velasquez
6 Morton and Ellen Winter
21 John and Hiedi Bassett
30 John and Bobbylee Ruskis

Yahrzeits in July:

The following names will be read each week during July to acknowledge those who have passed away who were connected with our community. If there are mistakes or omissions, please e-mail the temple at admin@tbthumble.org or leave a message at 281-446-5611.

Marc Fontanot, Leila Fern Camp, Sylvia Lesser, Lena Getz Lewis, Arthur Wiener, Helen Myers, Esther Spalter, Arthur Bricker, Murray Cuppy Rosenberg, Morris Kaufman, David Eynard, Ruth Nodler Schnitzer, Morris Blumstein, Marvin David Brand, Helen Wallack, Jack Stark, John Swaim, Cal Garcia, Maurine Swaim, Max Sanders, Joshua Lee Thomas, Joan Zinda, Hazel May Woods Tabor, Charles Lerner, Evelyn O'Rourke, Martha Houlihan, Lyuba Perelman, Ilse Ballin, Joseph Lappen, Bea Moss

TORAH PORTIONS for JULY 2020

Compiled by Rabbi Dan Gordon

July 3-4, 2020

Chukat/Balak, Numbers 19:1-25:9 (double portion)

A red cow is sacrificed in "Chukat," but the meaning of the ritual is unclear to us today. Instructions are given to purify those who have been in contact with a corpse. Following the death of Miriam, the Israelites complain again, fearful that their source of finding water is gone. God tells Moses to speak to a rock to get water, but Moses strikes the rock – twice -- in anger, and the water spurts out. Both Moses and Aaron are told that they will not enter the Promised Land because this action showed lack of faith.

"Balak" is named for the king of the Moabites who seeks to curse Israel but is cursed instead. He attempts to use Balaam to harm the Israelites, but the Lord intervenes and Balaam blesses them. In an odd exchange, Balaam's donkey prevents the curse by speaking to Balaam.

July 10-11, 2020 Pinchas, Numbers 25:10-30:1

Pinchas kills an Israelite man and a Midianite woman who had entered a tent together, and this act, considered heroic, saved the Israelites from a plague. God rewards the zealot, Pinchas with a covenant of peace. While it may seem unusual for the killer of adulterers to receive the covenant of peace, this portion also includes a famous legal distinction for women. The daughters of Zelophehad claim they should have the right to his inheritance because he died with no male heirs. Although it contradicts the law at the time, God tells Moses that their claim is just, and the daughters are awarded the inheritance. Toward the end of the portion, God informs Moses that he will not enter the Promised Land and Joshua will be his successor.

July 17-18, 2020 Matot-Masei, Numbers 30:2-36:13 (double portion)

Moses resolves a land dispute and provides further instructions for dividing land among the tribes. He teaches the Israelites to set up cities of refuge where those accused of involuntary manslaughter may find justice.

July 24-25, 2020 D'varim, Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22

The beginning of the fifth and final book of the Torah is "Devarim," or Hebrew for "words." Moses begins a lengthy recounting of desert journey. He reminds the Israelites of their times of doubt and how God has helped them reach the brink of the Promised Land. God decrees that none of Moses' generation will enter the land, and that Moses, himself, will not enter the land. Joshua has been delegated as the new leader, and a new generation of people, born in freedom, will undertake the challenge of settling in the land that was promised.