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Celebrate Tu B'Shevat : "The Jewish New Year of Trees"
Attend the 8th annual Seder at Temple Isaiah later this month!

Co-Presidents:
 Kathie Davis
 Terry Joseph
 Shelley Sherman

Rabbi: Jerry Blum

SHABBAT SERVICES ALERT

6:30 PM, UNTIL APRIL

and Daylight Savings Time



One of my favorite books is "The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein. It tells the story of a young boy who forms a deep bond with a tree. The tree selflessly provides him with its apples to eat and branches for the boy to build a house, always expressing happiness in giving to the boy. The boy visits the tree often and takes

what he needs from it. As the boy grows up, he seldom visits the tree, but eventually returns as an old man when the tree is nothing but a stump. Despite this, the tree is still there for the boy, providing him with a place to rest and reflect. The ending is bittersweet, and teaches us many lessons about relationships, unconditional love and boundaries.

This story is often seen as a metaphor for the relationship between humans and nature. The tree represents the earth, always giving to humanity without expecting anything in return. The boy represents humanity, taking from the earth without giving back and the book is a reminder that we must take care of our planet and give back to it in order to ensure its survival, and this is something that is so deeply embedded in our Jewish heritage. In the Book of Genesis, after the cosmic story of creation of the world and of Adam and Eve, we read this in Chapter 2, verse 8 through 9:

(8) The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the man whom He had formed. (9) And from the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and bad.

But why do you suppose these first humans were put into this lush garden? My first thought is that this was a gift to humans, but a deeper meaning quickly comes to mind. They were there as keepers and guardians of the land, a theme that is repeated throughout our scriptures and our Rabbinic writings. In Deuteronomy 20:19 we read: "When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its

trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down.

Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city?"

We are taught that when we go to war, we are allowed to eat from the trees but not cut them down for they were created to provide for this earth. This is a comment on the importance of not only our natural resources but also speaks to the relationship that humans have with their environment, very similar to the themes found in our story above.

But why all this talk about the ecology, and our surrounding human environment in our communities, nation, and world? As I write this article, we begin the Hebrew month of Sh'vat. Our Mishnah teaches us that there are 4 New Years during our Hebrew calendar and that on the 15th of this month, we celebrate the New Year of the Trees. Biblically, this means that Tu Bishvat (the 15th of Sh'vat) was a time of tithing (a form of Biblical taxation) and giving to the poor and there are many halakhot (Jewish laws) associated with this day. It took our Kabbalists to bring a different meaning to this holiday and, of course, a seder was written to highlight the many facets of nature and their/our relationship with the Divine. The first Tu Bishvat Seder was written by an anonymous student of the great Kabbalist, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria and was 50 pages long. Ever since, the Tu Bishvat Seder has been handed down through generations and observed by various communities. Our Modern Seder is based on a selection of new and old seders, with our own original elements added to the mix. Its order is based both on the order of native species to Israel and the four Kabbalistic worlds.

This month on February 14th, we will conduct our own Tu Bishvat Seder with generous help from Belle and Elliott Gayer. This has always been an important and delicious event, and it will be held on a Friday evening so our service will be shortened in order to enjoy the seder and learn about the importance of ecology and environment.

We look forward to seeing you, and of course, keep an eye out for our announcement flyer and remember to RSVP.

Rabbi Jerry



We don't know about you, but our 'Welcome Winter' signs have pretty much come down. However, these frigid days have not stopped us from continuing our exciting programming at Temple Isaiah. There's so much to look forward to!

For instance, on Sunday, February 9 at 3pm we'll host the second in a three-part Art Lecture Series by Professor Dennis Raverty. Raverty's knowledge and humor make his presentations not only interesting and informative, but also thoroughly enjoyable.

And last month our first Coffee with the Rabbi was so successful that we are doing it again on Tuesday, February 11 at 1:30pm. No topic is off limits; everything you wondered about Judaism can be explored and explained in an intimate and informal setting. Come for the discussion and stay for the coffee and snacks.

Meanwhile, just to remind ourselves that spring is coming, this year's Tu B'Shvat Seder will be bigger and better than ever as we celebrate on Shabbat Feb. 14th. Following a brief service we will enjoy a traditional celebration of nature and the seven species growing in Israel. RSVP's are a must, so watch the Weekly!

For those of you who haven't attended the

Brooks' Current Event conversations, you are missing something special. It is not a rehash of the front page headlines, but focuses on events that might be missed but are significant. Plus, Judy brings us science and medical news. We next meet on Sunday, the 16th at 3p m.

An absolute don't-miss is our Rosh Chodesh-Women's Shabbat service on February 28th. It will be a celebration of Jewish women leaders from a wide range of fields, as well as an empowering and spiritual service. We want all of our women congregants to participate in some way: prayer leaders, speakers, ushers, bakers, etc. Please contact Terry Birnbaum Horton for more details and say Yes to participating!

It's through the efforts of our community that we are stronger and make the world a brighter place.

Your Presidium,

Shelley, Terry, and Kathie

Share your Simchas or Memories with us.

Email images to: isaiahgn@yahoo.com.

Help Us Improve Our Recordkeeping

When you send a check to the Temple, please use the Memo field to indicate what the check is for (dues, an event, etc.).

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MEMO

2025 Dues



The Tax Man May Not Cometh

Anyone who's required to take a minimum annual distribution from their IRA can use that account to send a donation directly to the Temple for Temple Fundraisers including the auction, journal or dues and even the Kol Nidre appeal. Doing so saves you the taxes on the amount donated and satisfies that part of your required withdrawal. Your brokerage will have a form and/or call your



The 360 Circle of Tzedakah

By contributing to the 360 Circle you assure that your best wishes will be shared with all congregants who are celebrating a simcha, healing, or sadly suffering a loss. A Temple card sent to a fellow member will wish a Mazal Tov on an important occasion, express a get well, or a condolence, and it will always include your name. You won't have to write a separate check each time you wish to share your support; one check will cover you for the whole year! Simply send a payment of \$360 to Temple Isaiah, earmarked for the 360 Circle, and your name will be included on all cards sent out to commemorate the life events of your fellow congregants.



Archibald J. Motley Jr., *Blues*, 1929 (detail)

Art Lecture Series with Professor Dennis Raverty, Lecture 2 of 3, Sunday, February 9th at 3pm

The Great Depression and Postwar Struggles for African American Artists

Many African Americans were employed by the Federal Art program of the W.P.A. as artists, teachers and muralists. After the war some continued those careers forged during the previous decades under government support. This lecture considers the works of these artists.

\$15 PER LECTURE

(those who attended the first in the series are eligible for the adjusted fee of 3 lectures FOR \$40)



Coffee with the Rabbi:

Tuesday, February 11th, beginning at 1:30pm

Have you ever wanted to ask your rabbi anything about our traditions or practices? Come join Rabbi Jerry for coffee and schmoozing. Light refreshments will be served. RSVP to the office so we can prepare.



Tu B'Shevat Seder

**Following Kabbalat Service,
 Friday, February 14th, at 6 PM**

Let's celebrate and honor the sacred connection between Judaism, nature, and social action; a time when we recall the biblical teaching that "the tree of the fields is our life" (Deuteronomy 20:19). Enjoy kosher wines and a vegetarian meal, with servings containing the customary seven species.



And EVERY THIRD SUNDAY

**Current Events with Helman & Judy Brook
 NEXT conversation, Sunday, February 16th, at 3 PM**

and then March 16th...

Delve into current events, discuss how they're represented in the media and how they affect us.

February Events, continued



Womens' Rosh Chodesh Service **Friday, February 28th at 6:30pm**

Rosh Chodesh is a celebration of the new moon that has long been associated with women who are released from some obligations each month at that time. It is rooted in the Talmud but some believe it was a reward to Jewish women for refusing to give their jewelry for the golden calf.

The Women of Temple Isaiah will conduct a special service on Shabbat eve of February 28th and it promises to be moving and informative.

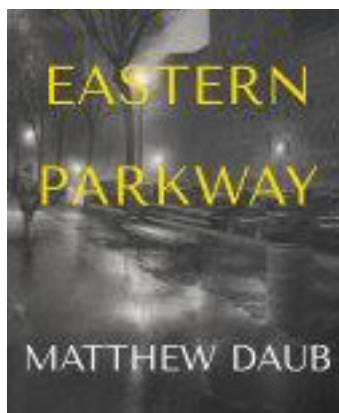
We invite all of our women to participate in speaking portions of the service, leading prayers and songs, and providing home-baked oneg. Please contact Terry Birnbaum-Horton to volunteer.

March Events, previewed



Shabbat Across America **Friday, March 7th**

"... hundreds of synagogues across the continent will take part in an historic national Jewish event to celebrate what unifies all Jews — Shabbat!" - NJOP.org



Book Group at Paula's house **Sunday, March 9th**

Reading: "Leaving Eastern Parkway" by Matthew Daub
Brooklyn's Hasidic community of Lubavitchers is turned upside down when family tragedy strikes and everyday life changes forever in the life of Zev Altshul. He is first placed into the care of the closed and close-knit community where he grew up, but soon realizes he can't stay.



Reverse Raffle **Saturday, March 22nd**

Prizes galore, so save the date!



ANNIVERSARIES

Sheila & Victor DeFazio.....Feb 9



BIRTHDAYS

Martin Secofsky.....Feb 9

Bill Hersh.....Feb 15

Helman Brook.....Feb 17

Carol Hersh.....Feb 22



YAHRZEITS

Irwin Hersh

Father of Bill Hersh (2/4)

Rose Greenberg

Grandmother of Mindy Israel (2/5)

Julius Abeles

Brother-in-Law of Jean Lesser (2/6)

Marvin Brodsky

Great Uncle of Jonathan Wagner (2/6)

Lawrence Branch

Brother of Suzanne Branch (2/7)

Fred Fein

Grandfather of Steve Fein (2/10)

Edward I. Marshak

Father of Martin Marshk (2/10)

Helen Friedlander

Mother of Steven Friedlander (2/11)

Shirley Aubrey

Grandmother of David Aubrey (2/12)

Philip Haber

Father of Diane Haber (2/12)

Richard Davis

Husband of Kathie, Father of Jennifer Davis (2/14)

Richard Schleifstein

Father of Scott Schleifstein (2/17)

Fannie Kornzweig

Mother of Marilyn Kornzweig (2/19)

Clara Lieber

Grandmother of David Aubrey (2/21)

Douglas P. Null

Husband of Marcia Null (2/21)

Jack M. Roth

Uncle of Mindy Israel (2/23)

Isaac Menashe

Brother of Jack Menashe (2/26)

Bernard Birnbaum

Grandmother of Terry Birnbaum-Horton (2/28)

Ruth Federlein

Mother of Rachel Greenwald (2/28)

Morris Hamel

Grandfather of Denise Miller (2/28)

January Donations



General Donations

Harold Rubin IMO Enid Rubin

Suzanne Branch IMO Sandy Fein
360 Circle IMO Sandy Fein

Ruth Isaac IMO Joan Jasper,
and Get Well wishes to Sheryl Isaac

Honoring Friends and Family



Order An Engraved Plaque to Honor and Remember Your Loved One

It is deeply rooted in Jewish tradition to place in the sanctuary of the synagogue a plaque with the names of loved ones who have passed away. Once a plaque is dedicated, it becomes a permanent memorial. The Yahrzeit lights will be illuminated on the yahrzeits of your loved one's death and at Yizkor services throughout the year. The cost per plaque is \$700.

Your Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Name of Deceased: _____ Date of Death: _____

Relationship: _____

☐ I wish to reserve a space for use in the future to be grouped with currently ordered plaques. _____ (# of spaces)

Please return form and payment to Temple Isaiah. Please note that all credit card charges have a 3% administrative fee.

February 2025

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|-----------|---|-----------|-----------|---|--|
| | | | | | | 1 Torah Study Zoom ONLY - 9:30am |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 Shabbat Services In Temple and Zoom - 6:30pm | 8 Torah Study In Temple and Zoom - 9:30am |
| 9 Raverty Art Series part 2 3pm | 10 | 11 Coffee with the Rabbi 1:30pm | 12 | 13 | 14 Shabbat Services In Temple and Zoom - 6:30pm | 15 NO Torah Study |
| 16 Current Events with Helman & Judy Brook 3pm | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 Shabbat Services In Temple and Zoom - 6:30pm | 22 Torah Study In Temple and Zoom - 9:30am |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 Women's Rosh Chodesh service -6:30pm | |

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1 Chelsea Place, Great Neck, NY 11021

Office Hours:

Wednesdays & Thursdays 12 - 3 PM

Call 516-487-5373 or email isaiahgn@yahoo.com for additional times.

Deadline for bulletin submissions: 15th of the month