

TEMPLE ISAIAH  
ישעיהו

# The Prophet

Magazine

**In This Issue:**

Temple Isaiah

50  
years

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TI@50

*Pullout Event Calendar*

From the Rabbi

Sacred Grounds

Junior Choir

The Ostrava Torah

Reform Movement

*Then and Now*

Disposing of Judaica

TI2020

*Task Force Updates*

2019:2

# In This Issue:

p. 3

## From the Rabbi

by Rabbi Craig Axler

p. 4–5

## Our Sacred Grounds

Responsible Stewardship

by Betsy Singer

p. 6–7, 17

## The Reform Movement

Then and Now

by Rabbi Craig Axler

p. 8–9

## The Ostrava Torah

Temple Isaiah's Memorial Scrolls Trust

Sefer Torah

by Lori Rudolph

p. 10–11

## TI@50

Pullout Calendar

p. 12–14

## A New Next Dor

For a New Generation

by Rabbi Daniel Plotkin

p. 15

## Junior Choir

Singing in the Synagogue

by Lainey Pearson-Moore

p. 16

## TI2020 Task Force Updates

Building Expansion, Adult Education

by Denny Rapport, Meredith Lundergan

p. 17

## Isaac Mayer Wise

Father of the American Reform Movement

by Rabbi Daniel Plotkin

p. 18

## What Do I Do With It?

Disposing of Judaica

by TI Staff

p. 19

## Bits & Pieces

Yiddishkeit

by Doris Geisler

Who's Who @ Temple Isaiah

Karen Jablon

New Members

In the Next Issue...

### Photo credits

p. 6: Public Domain; p. 4–5 Betsy Singer; p. 7: Tünde on Pixabay; p. 8–9 Philip Weber Photography (Torah photos), Public Domain (Ostrava synagogue), covered under the Creative Commons License (Czech map); p. 15 Samuel Pearson-Moore; p. 17: Public Domain

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# From the Rabbi

Shalom!

As you open this issue of *The Prophet*, the warmth of Summer is approaching, along with the thought of Summer rest and relaxation. Whether at the beach, the mountains, afar or local — I hope you are able to recharge and soak up some sunshine!



We are approaching a tremendously exciting time here at Temple Isaiah, entering our 50th year as a congregation. A full year's celebration is planned, and I look forward to seeing you at many of the events. I will, however, see less of you in the months of January and February.

It is with a tremendous note of gratitude to the congregation and Board that I will be taking the first sabbatical of my rabbinic career during the months of January and February, 2020. Sabbaticals are commonly a feature of the work of clergy, college professors, and other academics who utilize this time to recharge creative energies and pursue projects that may have been "on the shelf" for a long time. The term comes from Torah, the *Sh'mittah* — the sabbatical year the land is given to rest and replenish every seven years — with the expectation that its produce will only improve after that planned rest.

I will begin my two-month sabbatical at the end of our TI 50th Anniversary Israel trip (there's still room to join us!) by remaining in Israel to begin research on a writing project I have been incubating for many years. When I return from Israel, I will continue that research and writing here at home and am planning some travel to help in that process.

On a practical level, Rabbi Plotkin, the staff, and lay leadership of the congregation will cover elements of my rabbinic duties that are pressing during my absence. I am grateful to all who will assist in meeting the needs of our congregation. During my sabbatical there will be no B'nei Mitzvah, and while there are several major celebrations connected to our 50th anniversary year, I intend to be present as a congregant at some of these.

I welcome your questions about this sabbatical in person, on the phone, or via email, and let me reiterate my tremendous gratitude for this gift of time and energy, as I nurture myself in pursuit of being the best rabbi I can for our congregation. ■

*L'shalom — With Peace,  
Rabbi Craig Axler*

Join Rabbi Axler for  
a multigenerational

**TRIP TO ISRAEL!**

December 21, 2019–  
January 1, 2020

**Celebrate All Eight Nights of Hanukkah in Israel**

Highlights include Shabbat in Jerusalem, High-tech in Tel Aviv, touring the beautiful Galilee and Golan, and floating in the Dead Sea. Potential extension to Petra, Jordan available (December 31–January 3).

For itinerary, registration, or questions, email  
[Lori@templeisaiah.org](mailto:Lori@templeisaiah.org) or call 301.317.1101.



# Our Sacred Grounds

Responsible Stewardship

by Betsy Singer  
Co-chair, Sacred  
Grounds Committee



"Look at My works! See how beautiful they are, how excellent! For your sake, I created them all. See to it that you do not spoil and destroy My world, for if you do, there will be no one after you to repair it."

*Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13*

## Some Background

Now that Passover 5779 has come and gone, we really know that spring has come to Maryland as well. Gorgeous weather has inspired many of us to get outside and garden, run, bike, or walk the dog. Spring and summer days of balmy temperatures, bright sunshine, and gentle rains draw us to the outdoors.

It's been 15 years since Temple Isaiah completed building its new home, and we've tried to enhance the land that surrounds us, as well. We are situated on almost 20 acres of what was once farmland. The good news is that our plot is now level with gentle slopes, and provides a beautiful site for our contemporary synagogue. The bad news is that when we built the synagogue, a lot of good topsoil disappeared in preparing the land for construction. Much of the soil that once grew crops was paved over to accommodate the footprint of the building and our parking lot. All these alterations mean that normal drainage of rainwater into the ground and back into the water table was disrupted.

As conditions of our original permits with Howard County, we worked with Howard County government to design a modern storm water management system on the western side of our building. Since then, an intermittent stream on the western side is designated for native grasses and trees only, and is a habitat for wildlife. Red-winged blackbirds and other birds now live in this "sanctuary." The stream is able to handle large volumes of water that drain from Rt. 216 when needed, and directs the storm water to the wet pond (Extended Detention Structure) in the rear of the building. Over the years, the grasses around the pond have grown into a meadow that helps to absorb and hold the ground when we have a hard rain. The excess water from the pond drains into the Hammond Branch of the Patuxent River and eventually runs into the Chesapeake Bay. Fortunately, our backyard site benefits from two shade trees that provide an ideal location for an outdoor *bimah* and benches for summer Shabbat services in the outdoors.

## Sacred Ground Committee and *Tikkun Olam*

The goal of the Sacred Grounds Committee is to encourage good stewardship of our land and synagogue, by sustaining the natural beauty and function of our religious home for future generations, and fulfilling our Jewish value of *tikkun olam*.



The Committee brought more value to our outdoor improvements when we decided to participate in the Howard County program to join with the rest of the state of Maryland to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. The EPA issued pollution-reduction goals for each state that drains into the Chesapeake. Temple Isaiah helped the County get credits for reducing the amount of chemical, nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment, and trash that flows directly into streams and rivers by building four large rain gardens along the rear of the synagogue, under the classroom windows. The County's READY program, with teams of college students, built the gardens from 2012–15 at no cost to us. Today, we have a maintenance contract with Eco-Works, a non-profit organization that is the successor to READY. On Earth Day this year, representatives from Eco-Works came out to Temple Isaiah to clean out the gardens, weed, and refurbish the berms.

Trees also benefit us tremendously by improving air quality, reducing storm water runoff, and harboring wildlife. They moderate climate by creating a cooling effect and helping to moderate temperatures.

The Sacred Grounds Committee participates in several free Howard County programs:

- The Tree Canopy Program planted six trees in the front yard.
- The Stream Relief Program planted 50 trees along the intermittent stream.
- Temple Isaiah volunteers planted ten free trees in November 2017, from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

We also arranged for the building of the memorial Children's Garden honoring Morah Renee Panoff, former Preschool Director. Located next to the playground on the west side of the synagogue, Renee's Garden was dedicated in 2014 and is used by preschool staff for children ages three to five. Sacred Grounds has also begun working with Kulanu on environmental education, tailored to the age level of our Temple Isaiah Kulanu students.

Anyone who would like to join the Sacred Grounds committee to help get more trees from the Stream Relief Program, research planting a butterfly garden, or work on environmental units with/ for Kulanu, please contact Betsy Singer, [betsysing@gmail.com](mailto:betsysing@gmail.com), Denny Rapport, [idr9301@gmail.com](mailto:idr9301@gmail.com), or Fred Berko, [fredbmail@gmail.com](mailto:fredbmail@gmail.com). ■



# The Reform Movement

## Then and Now

by Rabbi Craig Axler

As our congregation prepares to celebrate our 50th anniversary as a home for Reform Judaism in Howard County, it is worthwhile to examine what it means to exist as a Reform congregation today. It is relevant to note that Temple Isaiah was not the first congregation in Columbia. The first was formed by the Howard County Jewish Council (ultimately Columbia Jewish Congregation), founded originally as a non-denominational synagogue in keeping with the healthy distrust of organized anything that animated the founding vision of Columbia. The first independent congregation was Temple Beth Shalom, envisioned by those who wanted a presence for Conservative Judaism in Howard County. Just a few months later in August 1970, ten families gathered to form the first Reform congregation of Howard County, with services once a month.

Some context is needed for the development of Reform Judaism in general. The origins of the movement begin in Central Europe in the late 18th century, with notable figures such as Rabbi Israel Jacobson (above). Among the earliest controversial reforms were the delivery of a sermon in the vernacular; the inclusion of musical instruments and mixed voice choirs, singing with the accompaniment of the organ (a HUGE debate ensued about building an organ inside the synagogue); and mixed seating for men and women.

Reform Judaism had limited impact in those early years in Europe. However, from the late 19th century in the "New World" of America — where everyone came from somewhere else — Reform Judaism was ripe for expansion. It was also due to the visionary work of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise (profile on page 17) that Reform Judaism became institutionalized and spread across the United States. Many of the same passions that animated the European version were foundations of American Reform Judaism, with additional factors taking on heightened significance: a social vision of progressive



thinking that would be termed "Prophetic Judaism"; a full-throated commitment to the absolute equality of men and women in the synagogue and community (leading down the line to seeking equality on the basis of sexual identity, racial diversity, and a number of other issues we currently group under "Audacious Hospitality"); and the struggle to constantly evaluate our liturgy, traditions, and practices to craft a modern Judaism in the home and the synagogue.

It would be incorrect to imagine that Reform Judaism as taught and practiced here at Temple Isaiah in the early 21st century is identical to the vision of those first American rabbis and congregation. Instead, our religion has been in a constant state of change, driven by self-reflection, processes of experimentation, learning from our neighbors, and the statements that seek to define our movement's beliefs and practices about once every generation.

One example of the timeline of Reform Judaism's practice is found in the following paragraph from the first collective statement of American Reform Judaism, the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform:

*"We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas entirely foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation."*

Translating 19th century rhetoric, what this meant in practical terms is that in the Reform synagogues of their day, neither kippah nor tallit would be worn (or tolerated) and the idea that a man's facial hair be trimmed (or grown) in accordance with religious ritual rather than the fashions of the times would be seen as ridiculous. Additionally, Reform Jews at the

turn of the century would have found keeping kosher in any manner a silly remnant of the past. There is a famous incident of the "Trefa Banquet" that was served at the celebration of the first ordination of the Hebrew Union College, which included clams, crabs, shrimp, and frog's legs, in addition to dairy mixed with meat. Rather than the rituals of traditional Judaism, that statement affirms their commitment to "accept as binding only [Judaism's] moral laws and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives." Their vision of what Reform Judaism demanded was "a progressive religion, ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason... to participate in the great task of modern times; to solve, on the basis of justice and righteousness, the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society."



By contrast, the most recent iteration of Reform Jewish ideas, 1999's "Statement of Principles," responds to the changing nature of American Reform Judaism in the 20th century as the balance of tradition and innovation becomes a central focus. The authors articulate:

*"We are committed to the ongoing study of the whole array of mitzvot and to the fulfillment of those that address us as individuals and as a community. Some of these mitzvot, sacred obligations, have long been observed by Reform Jews; others, both ancient and modern, demand renewed attention as the result of the unique context of our own times."*

This text opens the door to a wide array of practice in Reform synagogues and homes, and reflects the reality that practice varies greatly within current Reform Judaism.

I grew up as a Reform Jew in an era dominated by the doctrine of "Individual Informed Choice" — that any Reform Jew makes their own decisions on observance, tradition, innovation, and belief (provided that their choice was informed by knowledge and education, as to what Jewish sources have to say about the decision) and this choice is viewed as inherently valid. I did not know at the time this concept (found in the 1976 Centennial Perspective) was authored primarily by Dr. Eugene Borowitz, who would be a professor of mine at HUC. Dr. Borowitz's approach to the concept of covenant and choice (as well as many other theological ideas he articulated in his long and vibrant career) had a greater impact on setting the agenda of the Reform movement of the 21st century than any other thinker. However, Dr. Borowitz was not shy about saying when he thought he had gotten something wrong. With regard to "Individual Informed Choice," he would later comment that he wished he had anchored it in the idea of both INDIVIDUAL and COMMUNAL choices — that is, an individual may have the agency to make valid choices, but so do communities (particularly synagogues) and part of the covenant of being involved in community leads to everyone agreeing to communal choices and norms. As a specific example, not every member of Temple Isaiah observes the kosher laws; and yet, our Religious Practices Committee proposed (and our Board adopted) standards of an "Ethical Kitchen" that dictate the foods that are and are not served here.

From its founding, Temple Isaiah has envisioned itself as a "Traditional Reform Congregation" — as opposed to a "Classical Reform Congregation." Key differences might include the greater ratio of Hebrew in prayer; the observance of "Second Day" holy day calendar for Rosh Hashanah and the other Pilgrimage Festivals; a deep respect for the voice of tradition while embracing creative and innovative liturgy and practice.

Fifty years ago, the differences between a Traditional and Classical Reform congregation were quite stark. And while there is a tremendous amount of variation within our movement today, there is little question that contemporary American Reform Judaism looks quite different from what was practiced in the 19th century, the 1950s, or even the 1990s. One event during our coming year of celebration will be the opportunity to honor our affiliation as a Reform congregation with a Shabbat of activities led by two special guests from the Union for Reform Judaism. On Friday night, February 14, 2020 we will host Rabbi David Saperstein, the URJ's Senior Advisor for Policy and Strategy. Rabbi Saperstein spent many decades at the helm of the Religious Action Center in DC and was also US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom under the Obama Administration. He is one of the most engaging and passionate Reform leaders of our generation. That Saturday (February 15, 2020) we will be joined by Rabbi Leora Kaye, the URJ's Director of Programs who

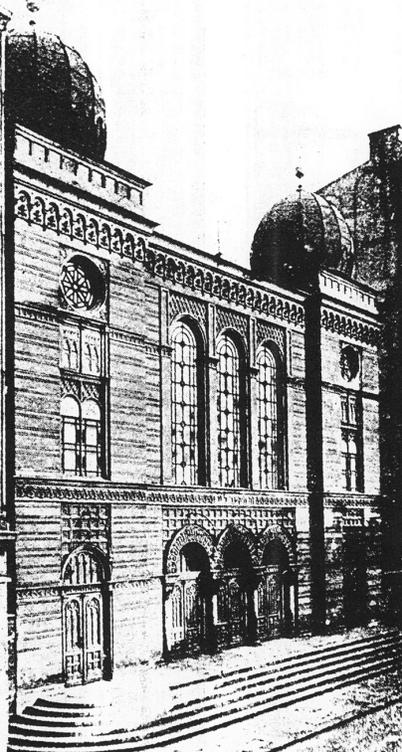
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# The Ostrava Torah

by Lori Rudolph

## Temple Isaiah's Memorial Scrolls Trust Sefer Torah

In 1942, the brave staff of the Jewish Museum in Prague persuaded the occupying Nazis to store religious items and Torah scrolls from the Jewish communities in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. They sent letters to the communities, requesting that they send their religious items and Torah scrolls to the museum for safe keeping, believing that they would be saving the communities themselves. According to The Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot, "348 ritual objects, 680 books, and 246 documents from Ostrava's Jewish community were sent." The Jewish curators for the museum meticulously catalogued and numbered every item, with the goal of reuniting the items with their communities as soon as it was possible. Once the cataloguing was complete, the curators were sent to concentration camps where most of them perished. The Torah were sent to the Michle Synagogue outside of Prague and forgotten, while the rest of the items were stored at the museum. More than 150 Jewish communities in Czechoslovakia were destroyed during the Holocaust, but Prague was spared. The collection of Jewish artifacts, stored during the war in more than 50 warehouses, survived the Shoah but very few members of these Jewish communities survived or returned. After the war, these items did not have a home to reunite with and in many cases, these items are all that remain of their communities.



In 1963, the Communist government in Czechoslovakia tried to sell the Jewish items to Jewish communities abroad to make money. Erik Estorik and Ralph Yablon, art collectors, purchased 1,564 Torah scrolls in January 1964 and sent them to Westminster Synagogue in London. A memorial and museum were established to care for these Torah under the Memorial Scrolls Trust (MST). Due to two decades of neglect and being stored in the damp basement of the Michle Synagogue, most of the rescued scrolls were damaged. More than 50 years later, many of the Torah have been distributed to congregations on "permanent loan" around the world. The Trust forbids selling or transferring the scrolls should a congregation close, and the Trust requires the scrolls to be used if possible, or displayed if not.

They cannot be buried as would be customary; they are to be available to commemorate those communities. They help us remember entire communities that perished in the Holocaust, but quietly they give a message of hope and resilience. These scrolls have been given a second life.

In 1982, Temple Isaiah congregant Ms. Sylvia Singer arranged for a Torah from the MST to be entrusted to our congregation. Our Sefer Torah, number 581 in the Memorial Scrolls Trust collection (MST), is one of fourteen rescued from Ostrava, in what is now the Czech Republic. We do not know from which of the six synagogues in Ostrava it originated, but the certificate that accompanied MST #581 indicates that it was written at the end of the 19th century. It is the directive of the MST for those granted a Torah to learn about its origins, and to connect to the Jewish community that once thrived there. It is the wish of the Trust to connect the more than 1,000 Scroll guardians to the MST and each other, thus ensuring the continued sharing of information around the world, particularly so the communities they came from, the people, and the Shoah will never be forgotten.

The Temple Isaiah congregation reads from the Ostrava Torah on Yom Kippur afternoon, on the Shabbat closest to Yom HaShoah, and for our Confirmation Class on Shavuot. In 2018, it was also read on Kristallnacht. It has, on occasion, been read on Shabbat by a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

The fourteen Torah from Ostrava can be found in Canada, England, Israel, and the United States. Within the United States they are located in California, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, New York, and Ohio. In addition, close to 1,000 other MST scrolls can be found throughout the world in Argentina, Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece,

Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland, Virgin Islands, and West Indies. They are also on loan to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the US Naval Academy, Westminster Abbey, The White House, Windsor Castle, and Yad Vashem.

### Connections to Ostrava

My family has direct ancestral connections to Ostrava. One set of my grandparents and my sons Jake, and Matthew's great-grandparents lived in Ostrava. Both families were well-established and had comfortable lives in the city by the 1920s, owning a major distillery that necessitated the import of fruit from British Palestine. It ultimately gave them the connections they needed to emigrate to England during World War II. Family members held positions as doctors, lawyers, engineers, professional musicians, and an architect. Unfortunately, the majority of the buildings the architect designed were destroyed by 1945. On March 14, 1939 as the German forces massed on the Czech Border, my grandparents received a phone call to let them know of the impending invasion and to tell them it was time to leave. Unfortunately, not all of the relatives were in a position to emigrate. My grandparents left immediately but by this time, the German troops had already crossed the border and they had to drive past them on their way to the train. In her oral history at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, my great-aunt tells the story of how she drove her brother and sister-in-law to the train station as the Nazis invaded, where they then traveled by train through Germany and Holland en route to England. The train passed through Nazi territory, stopping in Sagen in Prussia, Berlin, and finally getting to Amsterdam by March 17.

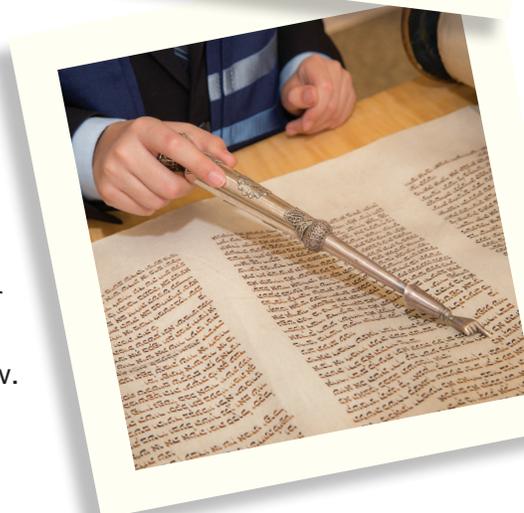
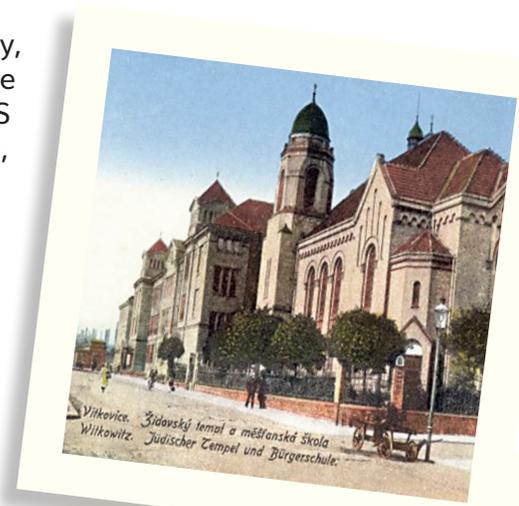
From Amsterdam they were able to get a boat to England. Their desire was to emigrate to the US but they weren't admitted immediately and had to spend at least a year in Ecuador before finally being allowed into the US.

Most of the extended family was taken to Terezín and then transferred to Auschwitz and other concentration camps. A great-aunt had to go into hiding as the Nazis began to round up the Jewish citizens of Ostrava. She joined the resistance and was able to survive until the liberation of Czechoslovakia. She stayed after the war and entered government service for several years until the communists gained control and put new limits on the Jews.

Like the rest of the Jewish society in Ostrava, many of my family members were murdered, a few left and survived, but almost none returned. Family members who were able to escape emigrated to Australia, England, Israel, and the United States. Several family members perished in the camps. Most directly were my great-grandparents, who were deported on the third transport to Terezín on September 26, 1942. They were murdered on October 22, 1942 in Treblinka. Although there were six synagogues in Ostrava, there is a possibility that my relatives may have read from MST #581, directly linking this Torah to the Temple Isaiah community.

To read the complete article about our Ostrava Torah, please visit our website at [www.templeisiah.org/the-ostrava-torah/](http://www.templeisiah.org/the-ostrava-torah/).

To learn more about the Memorial Scrolls Trust, please visit [www.memorialscrollstrust.org/](http://www.memorialscrollstrust.org/). ■



*This handy pullout calendar will help you plan for all of our wonderful anniversary-year events. Contact event chairs if you'd like to volunteer!*



**1. Sunday, September 8, 2019**

**Isaiah Fest** — Rides and games for our youngsters, entertainment for our adult members, and of course, food for all. (Susan Green, chair [sigreen@epr1.com](mailto:sigreen@epr1.com))



**2. Sunday, October 13, 2019**

**A Temple Isaiah Women's Intergenerational Tea** (Donna Levinson, chair)



**3. Saturday, October 19, 2019**

**Food Truck Fiesta** (sponsored by Mens' Club, Fred Berko, chair)



**4. Friday, Saturday and Sunday, November 1–3, 2019**

**A Celebration of Our Beginnings** — Featuring Rabbi Steve Fuchs (Lynn Abramson, chair, Marion Miller, Jackie Norden, Donna Kaplan, and Cindy Sandler, co-chairs)



**5. December, 2019**

**Temple Isaiah trip to Israel** (Rabbi Craig Axler, chair)



**6. Friday, January 31, Saturday and Sunday, February 1–2, 2020**

**Homecoming Weekend** — A Shabbat featuring and honoring Jewish professionals who grew up at Temple Isaiah. (Margie & Denny Rapport, co-chairs [idmlrapport@gmail.com](mailto:idmlrapport@gmail.com))



**7. Friday and Saturday, February 14–15, 2020**

**Celebrating the Diversity of Reform Judaism** (Gary & Cathie Perolman, co-chairs)



**8. Sunday, February 16, 2020**

**Our 50th Anniversary Special Mitzvah Day** (Susan Lower, chair [slower60@gmail.com](mailto:slower60@gmail.com))



**9. Sunday, March 15, 2020**

**Kinky Boots at Toby's Dinner Theater** (sponsored by the Renaissance Group; open to all members of TI) (Robyn Gold, Milt & Judy Kline, Susan Dreifuss, co-chairs [n8tvnyr122@yahoo.com](mailto:n8tvnyr122@yahoo.com))

# f Temple Isaiah ישיבה



## 10. Sunday, April 19, 2020

A special program for the Preschool families and Temple members with young children (*Laurie Avrunin, chair*)



## 11. Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 24–26, 2020

A Celebration of Our Mid Years — Featuring Rabbi Mark Panoff (*Lynn Abramson, chair, Marion Miller, Jackie Norden, Donna Kaplan, and Cindy Sandler, co-chairs*)



## 12. Friday, and Sunday, May 15 and 17, 2020

Celebrating our Educators, Past and Present (*Leslie Brodsky, Dara Glenn, and David & Jen Lubitz, co-chairs*)



## 13. Saturday, May 16

A Special 50th Anniversary Evening of Music — Featuring Marshall Kohen and Shir Isaiah (*Carol Shapiro and Jill Nord, co-chairs*)



## 14. Friday, June 5, 2020

A Celebration of our Past and Present Leaders — Featuring our TI Presidents and our current Board of Trustees (*Susan Stuart, chair*)



## 15. Friday, June 5, 2020

Shabbarbque — prior to Shabbat services (*sponsored by Sisterhood, Jeanie Lazerov, chair jlazerov@verizon.net*)



## 16. Sunday, June 7, 2020

A Special 50th Anniversary MatzohBall Run (Mens' Club)



## 17. Saturday, June 13, 2020

Culminating Concert — Featuring the music of Billy Joel, starring Wade Preston, who played "The Piano Man" in *Movin' Out on Broadway*. (*Randi Singer and Stephanie Youngworth, co-chairs*)



## 18. Ongoing

Legacy Art Project (*Doris Geisler, chair*); Preschool Legacy Project (*Lori Rudolph, chair*); Tribute Book (*Amy Kramer, chair*); Historical Archive (*Arlene & Ed Gillis, co-chairs*)

# A NEW Next Dor by Rabbi Daniel Plotkin

## For a NEW Generation



In 2016, the Religious School began a close examination of itself and where it could be in terms of providing a complete entry into Jewish life for our students. The task force on *Reimagining Jewish Education* undertook a nearly two-year task of examining who we were, what our TI members and students wanted, and how we could best deliver that. The initial outcomes from that task force included a revamped Hebrew program for all K–6th Grade students, an entirely new curriculum and structure for the 4th–6th Grade, integrating our Youth Groups more within our religious school program, and a new name for this program: *Kulanu*.

With the disbanding of the task force in the spring of 2018, we knew the work wasn't done. The Kulanu educators knew the next place to look at was our Next Dor and Dor V'Dor programs, which serve our students from 8th Grade through High School. We spoke to students, parents, and other stakeholders to see what was desired for this age group. While learning from some of the leading voices in this area, we took the collected data and created a New Next Dor that would serve all students following the Gesher (7th Grade) B'nai Mitzvah year.

A continuing theme was that our students are busy. The Howard County School system is a demanding place both in terms of academic and extracurricular expectations. The process of getting into a college (and getting scholarship money as well) is also demanding, making the free time our students have to continue their Jewish education and involvement a precious commodity.

We realized what was needed in our program was flexibility: the ability for students to choose their own path and to validate the activities they were already doing that kept them connected to TI and the Jewish community. We had too many students who were active and involved, but because they could not commit to Sunday night classes, were not able to go through Confirmation.

Identifying four areas in which students could be involved, three of which do not require a weekly commitment, we have created a program that allows our students to pick a path of involvement and learning that works for them. Those who choose to be full participants will be on a path to completing Confirmation, those who don't want

to be as heavily involved can still stay connected, participating in classes and other programs as they choose.

### The four areas of involvement are:



1. **Sunday Evening Classes:** Classes will continue on Sunday evenings, but rather than a year-long commitment from students for 20+ classes, we will hold three elective blocks of four class sessions each. During each block, students will be able to choose either two 1-hour electives or one 2-hour intensive elective. These classes will not only focus on Jewish knowledge, but combine that knowledge with skills that will help them in college and beyond.



2. **Shabbatons and Overnights:** The Ben Topus Shabbaton has long been a part of our teen programming and will continue

each fall. A new shabbaton (called the Next Dor Shabbaton, for now) will be held in the spring. In addition, we are integrating the L'Taken Social Justice seminar into the program with better financial support for participants. We will focus on both writing and public speaking skills and government lobbying as part of the program. Also, NFTY-MAR regional events will be an important way for students to connect in this area.



3. **The Madrichim Program:** Our longstanding Madrichim Program allows our 8th Grade and above students a paid opportunity be involved by assisting teachers of our younger grades. New this year, there will be an official Madrichim Coordinator/Instructor, who will guide our teens through an opportunity to engage in more learning, both to refresh the basics of Judaics and Hebrew and to learn skills that will allow them to be more effective

Students seeking to be confirmed, whether in 10th Grade or after, should be involved in three of these four areas on a consistent basis. In order to track student progress, we decided to add a very personal touch. Rather than students reporting "credits" to us, each fully-enrolled student will receive two mentoring sessions per year from either Rachel Petroff Kessler (8th Grade), Rabbi Plotkin (9th Grade), or Rabbi Axler (10th Grade), though exceptions may occur. Our 11th and 12th Graders will be assigned a mentor from among the three.

During those mentoring sessions, which will be held at a location of the student's choice, the student will share what they have been doing, reflect on what they got out of it, and the mentor will help guide students to areas of involvement that may interest them. Of course, this will also require spending meaningful time with our students so that we can guide them to those opportunities that will interest them the most.

Teens who don't feel they can commit to three of the four areas will also be able to participate. Sunday evening classes will be offered on an à la carte basis, and students not enrolled may still participate in shabbatons, L'taken, and NFTY programming.

It is a complex system when seen as a whole, but for each individual student, it should be simple to construct their own involvement. We've included two examples of "students" and how they navigate the program.

The word "Dor" means "generation"; the Next Dor program is about nurturing and growing the next generation of our Jewish people: professionals, lay leaders, and communal participants, all of whom are crucial to our Jewish future. Through this program, we hope that all of our teens at TI will participate one way or another, continuing their connections to Judaism in a way that fits into their own lives.

**Keep reading to meet David and Kelly, as they navigate the program in their own way.**

in the classroom. All Madrichim will be full participants in the Next Dor Program, affording them the opportunity to attend Sunday evening classes and Shabbatons at no extra cost.



4. **Jewish Engagement:** This is the most flexible area of the program. We want our students to be engaged in TI and the Jewish community at large. We want to recognize the efforts of those who already are. Fulfillment of this area might include official Temple Isaiah programs, such as our SYTI youth group, DreamBuilders programs, reading Torah on Friday nights, Cold Weather Shelter, and so much more. It may also include involvement outside of Temple Isaiah, such as BBYO, programs through the Associated of Baltimore or the DC Federation, summer opportunities such as the Tikvah program, or a multitude of URJ and other camp experiences.



**David** enjoys the learning aspects of religious school, but also wants a chance to hang out with friends from both TI and elsewhere. He's involved in theater at school, which takes up much of his time on Sunday mornings. How might David proceed in the New Next Door as he looks to continue his Jewish involvement?

1. **Sunday Evening Education:** He studies a variety of Jewish topics, while also building skills that will help him in college and beyond.
2. By attending the **Shabbatons**, David finds greater connection to friends and deepens his learning. The fun he has on the Shabbatons convinces him to go on NFTY weekend programs.
3. David is **engaged** by helping out with Cold Weather Shelter in the winter, and attends several local work days for DreamBuilders. He also comes to the SYTI events when he is able.

In 10th Grade, David is confirmed and continues his education through high school graduation. His classmates who completed Confirmation with him come and give him a standing ovation for his role in his school's production of *Sweeney Todd*.



**Kelly** is a serious Lacrosse player, and her team meets on Sundays late in the afternoon. She wasn't able to participate in Next Dor during 8th Grade, but she missed her friends and the connection to her Judaism. She also wants to spend time with her local Jewish friends who aren't a part of Temple Isaiah. How might Kelly proceed in the New Next Dor as she looks to re-engage with her Jewish community?

1. Serving as a **Madricha** on Sunday mornings not only gives her a little bit of spending money, but she gets to spend time working with young children, while gaining opportunities to learn more about Judaism.
2. She **engages** by joining BBYO and regularly attends local events as a way of connecting to her Jewish friends at school.
3. She attends the **Shabbatons**, which end early on Sundays, and enjoys her time with TI friends. She also attends the L'Taken seminar, getting to speak with her Congressional representatives about things that matter to her.

Entering 11th Grade, Kelly decides she wants to be confirmed, and arranges her schedule to be able to attend Confirmation class over eight Sunday nights during the year. Her team also wins the state title in the same year! ■

# Junior Choir

## Singing in the Synagogue

by Lainey Pearson-Moore



Junior Choir is Temple Isaiah's choir for kids and teens, from 1st Grade through 12th Grade. Junior Choir has been around since 2015, led by Morah Pamela Axler. The junior choir practices, performs, and learns Hebrew songs. The choir practice two times a month and performs as part of Family Shabbat. The choir also performs in special functions.

My name is Lainey Pearson-Moore, age 7, and I have been in choir for three years. I joined choir because I like making new friends, performing, and singing. My favorite thing about choir is making friends and singing in front of a crowd with my friends.

I asked Mallory Heiserman, age 9, a few things about what she liked about choir and how long she has been in choir. Mallory has been in choir for two years. She also said she joined because "I like to try new things. I thought it would be fun." She said her favorite thing about choir is, "going up on the stage and performing."

I asked Lev Axler, age 17, a few things about what he liked about choir and how long he has been in choir. Lev has been in multiple

junior choirs for a total of ten years, four with Temple Isaiah. He said he joined because "My mom, Morah Pam, started it and she asked me if I could join. I said absolutely." His favorite thing about choir is, "when all the kids come on the *bimah* and sing together."

I asked Morah Pam, the choir director, a few things about what she likes about choir. Morah Pam shared that she has been teaching religious school music for 26 years. She said, "I like to hear the beautiful voices and see everyone love singing." She also shared that, "choir is such a special group because they love to sing, they are kind, and the community enjoys seeing the children's faces." Her favorite thing about choir is "When we sing on family Shabbat and help lead services." Something you may not know about Morah Pam is that she remembers her first music teacher, Morah Tonkel, who started her journey of loving music.

You should join choir today because we have excellent leadership, friendship, kindness, and singing. So kids, get up, stop watching television, and show up for choir!

**JOIN TODAY!!!** ■



# TI2020 Task Force Updates



## Building Expansion

You may recall from the committee's last update that the Potential Building Expansion Committee has the following goals:

1. Identify the issues that interfere with our programming today.
2. Identify issues that might constrain programming in the future as we expand our current education, worship, and social action programs.
3. Suggest cost-effective options for mitigating those issues.

We have finished goals 1 and 2 and presented our findings to the Board of Trustees. The report included a recommendation to engage an architectural firm with a track record of synagogue design and master planning. At the Board's February meeting, it approved the recommendation to hire Shinberg Levinas Architects to develop concepts that address the shortfalls and issues identified in our report.

When we receive all of the architect's recommendations, our staff and lay leaders will review them to see which, if any, we are ready

to undertake. The recommendations will also include a time-phased program for remodeling or expansion of our facility.

An interesting excursion from our original charter is our consideration of the house and barn on our property to meet some of our current and future needs. In case you aren't aware of it, we have a three-bedroom house and a barn on the northern edge of our 25-acre property. The house has been used as a temporary home for Isaiah's Gifts, and occasionally by guests of the Temple for short overnight stays. The barn stores materials for our sukkah and the Matzoball 5K race. A question we are now looking at is whether these facilities could be used more often with remodeling and updating.

It's exciting to think and dream about what our Temple could or should look like in the future. If you have thoughts about improvements to our physical spaces, please contact Denny Rapport ([idr9301@gmail.com](mailto:idr9301@gmail.com)), Susan Dreifuss ([jsdreifuss@gmail.com](mailto:jsdreifuss@gmail.com)), or Beth Millstein ([alto1voice@gmail.com](mailto:alto1voice@gmail.com)). ■

Denny Rapport



## Adult Education

Thank you to everyone who responded to our survey on Adult Education! We were thrilled to have more than 100 respondents, giving us valuable information that will help us shape the future of Jewish learning for adults here at Temple Isaiah. Among the key takeaways for our committee:

- Weekday evenings and Sunday mornings are the most popular times for classes and programming.
- Topics of high interest include Jewish history, Jewish thought, and text study.
- Congregants would like more opportunities for single-session classes and speakers.
- Current participants in our on-going adult education offerings, such as Torah Study and Torah on Tap, are very satisfied with their experience!

Based in part on the feedback we received through the survey, we are preparing a proposal for the Board of Trustees to help ensure that adult education at Temple Isaiah continues to flourish and meet the needs of our congregation. ■

...continued from page 7

will give us a vision for Reform Judaism into the future. Watch the 50th anniversary publicity for additional details.

I want to close with a quote from an address that was given by Barry Sklar, Temple Isaiah's first president, on the occasion of the congregation's first anniversary. Barry passed away a few months ago, and I was struck by the following, prescient words as I reviewed some of the archival material he generously shared with me. He wrote in 1972: "In the Reform movement, we have thousands of beautiful Temples, and hundreds of learned rabbis, and a very few beautiful CONGREGATIONS.

Whether you know it or not, this congregation has the potential to lead the Reform Movement in a new direction. A direction which will produce knowledge of and commitment to Jewish ideals. We have it in our power to enrich our lives through Judaism. The only problem is that we don't yet know how to use our wealth."

With an awareness of our past, a clear articulation of our present values, and an openness to the vibrant and creative future that lies ahead of us, I look forward to celebrating our identity as a Reform congregation in our 50th year and far, far beyond! ■

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# Isaac Mayer Wise

Father of the American Reform Movement  
by Rabbi Daniel Plotkin



At the end of March, I joined about 600 members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the organization of North American Reform Rabbis, in Cincinnati for our annual conference. The location was chosen for a purpose: to celebrate the 200th Birthday of Isaac Mayer Wise, the institutional founder of American Reform Judaism.

Wise began his American rabbinate in Albany, New York. While there, he began to implement some precepts of his German reform-minded colleagues. When his ideas on rejecting an individual messiah were published he was dismissed from his position, but he stayed to lead Rosh Hashanah services. As a result, during the morning service a fight broke out between his supporters and opponents, forcing the police to clear the building. Wise's supporters then began a new synagogue with him as Rabbi.

A few years after, Wise relocated to Cincinnati to lead K.K. B'nai Yeshurun (now known as Wise Temple). He realized that American Judaism needed American-trained Rabbis; he attempted to start a school, but it foundered after a short while with no financial backing. In the 1870s, he decided that the congregations which would ultimately benefit from the school should provide the funding and organized the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now Union for Reform Judaism), for the purposes of funding the school and mutual support.

After two years and several dozen congregations in the Union, Wise began the Hebrew Union. After several years of the college in operation, Wise and his American ordained colleagues deemed a Rabbinic organization necessary and formed the CCAR.

Wise was the founder of these core organizations of the Reform movement. While the ideology of Reform Judaism was led by others more radical than Wise as it evolved over time, the institutions that developed and flourished under Wise's leadership still endure today, not only serving their initial purposes but much more.

When CCAR holds its conference in Cincinnati, I and so many others feel drawn to it. It is not only the site where the Reform movement developed, but for many of us it is our school and the place we lived for four (or more) years, learning what it means to be a Rabbi in the 21st century. While there are now four campuses of HUC (which merged with New York's Jewish Institute of Religion in the 1940's), it is in Cincinnati where it all began and from where so many of today's Reform Movement leaders come.

CCAR meets every year and we all look forward to gathering next March in the city that was a home for so many of our TI members: Next year in Baltimore. ■



# What Do I Do With It?

## Disposing of Judaica

by TI Staff

Cleaning out is always a challenging process, all the more so when it is the home of a recently-departed loved one, or your childhood home. It's always difficult to know what to do with things that had personal value and you just aren't sure what to do with them. Judaic items, like ritual objects and books, often fall into this category. This article is a guide to what you can do with those items you no longer wish to keep.

Some items have sacred meanings. If you are in possession of a Torah scroll, old prayer books, Tallitot, Tefilin sets, mezuzah scrolls, or Jewish sacred texts such as Bibles in Hebrew/Chumashim, Talmud volumes and other such items in Hebrew, these need to be buried.

If you have space and ability to do a burial yourself, it's halachically acceptable (check local ordinances!). If you don't, Sol Levinson's Funeral home in Pikesville accepts such items, so plan a trip on a weekday, and enjoy some great deli or bagels afterward. If the books are still in good condition, contact Rabbi Plotkin, as he has worked with a dealer of used books and will be glad to connect you with him.

For old papers containing the name of God, composting is an excellent method of disposal, and recycling is acceptable (Reform Responsa 5762.1) if composting is not available to you.

Other items are considered on a lower level of *kedusha*, but should still be handled with respect. These items include: mezuzah cases, Hanukkah menorahs, Shabbat candlesticks, seder plates, and more. These items may be thrown away, but donation to a store like Goodwill or listing on a site like freecycle.org, can give these items new life. Kippot are clothing items and can be discarded.

For Judaica and Judaic books, including old Hebrew school texts, many people are inspired to donate them to a synagogue (the same is true of old Judaica). While we appreciate the thought, we respectfully ask that people find another option. At Temple Isaiah, our space is limited, our library is full, and any Hebrew school book that is more than five years old is likely out of date and has been replaced with newer items, especially with all the new curriculum coming in. These items can be placed in recycling bins or thrown away. We simply don't have the space to keep it or the resources to process it.

Of course, if you still have questions about what to do with a particular item, feel free to reach out to our Rabbis. An email with a picture of the item and description, if necessary, is a great way to do this and they are usually pretty quick to respond and offer suggestions. ■

# Bits & Pieces

# Welcome

## New Members!

Charles Koplick & Susan Tafler  
Jonathan & Judy Solomon  
Adam & Jenny Rodgers  
Richard & Lenore Gelfman

## זאקייט

with Doris Geisler

Yiddish is a language with ritualized curses called **KLOLES**: expressions that invoke death, disease, and misfortune, and are often specific about the body part that is being cursed. It's an overt hostility, a way of letting off emotional steam, and not intended as a true curse.

Yiddish **kloles** are delivered in an elegant, eloquent, or humorous way.

זאל ער קרענקען און געדענקען

Zol er krenken un gedenken

**Let him suffer and remember.**

זאל אים וואקסן בוריקעס אין פופיק,

און זאל ער פישן מיט בארשט!

Zol im vaksn burikes in pupik,  
un zol er pishn mit borsht!

**May beets grow in his belly  
button, so he'll pish out borsht!**

## Who's Who @ Temple Isaiah



Name: Karen Jablon

Family: Husband Allan, daughter Rebecca, a nurse at Johns Hopkins, and son Benjamin, a student at the University of Colorado.

Hometown: Glenside, Pennsylvania

Something You Might Not Know About Me: I have a cat, Loki, that walks on a leash. He was *Baltimore's Child* magazine's Pet of the Month, and he has raised more than \$200 in a fundraiser for my school. People paid to take him for a walk.

Position at Temple Isaiah: 6th Grade Kulanu Teacher

I've Been a Teacher Here Since: ~2015

Parents and Students Can Come to Me If They Need: Help with just about anything.

Why I love being at TI: The Kulanu staff is the best. ■

## In the Next Issue...

- \* Young Voices
- \* Emerging Leaders Program
- \* TI Security Update
- \* connectIon
- \* The Importance of Community





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Remembering Our *Past*  
Celebrating Our *Future*



The 50th Anniversary Committee  
is still looking for your Temple  
Isaiah photos and memorabilia!

You can drop them at the TI  
office for scanning, or email  
digital files to Arlene & Ed Gillis  
at [arlenebg1@verizon.net](mailto:arlenebg1@verizon.net).