



December 2015 Newsletter

CONGREGATION
B'NAI ABRAHAM

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FROM THE DESK OF THE RABBI



In Hebrew, the same word, “Hodu”, for “giving thanks” is also the same word for “turkey.” Although technically, the derivation of the word for “turkey” is more closely associated with the word for “India.” This means in Hebrew, the bird’s origins are connected to India. I wonder whether Columbus named the turkey because he thought he was landing in India ... or because he was “thankful” for the discovery. Oh, the musings of a rabbi during Thanksgiving. Depending when you received this notice, I hope you are enjoying or enjoyed a festive Thanksgiving.

As we soon turn from Thanksgiving towards Hannukah, I am particularly thankful for the religious freedoms that we enjoy as Americans. Many of us listen to the news from all over the world, full of strife, concerning the rise of religious extremism. It is very sad how some of the fear of potential terrorism has led to an unwelcoming environment for immigrants from Islamic countries, many of whom are fleeing religious persecution.

Do the arguments sound familiar? Should we only take the Christian Syrians? Why are we letting in immigrants when they’ll take our jobs? Do the refugees harbor foreign ideologies inconsistent with our Constitution, our sense of patriotism and our way of life?

We need to be cautious, but some of the rhetoric rises to demagoguery of the worst form. I read a cartoon recently that said it all. An Indian met a Pilgrim and said to his friend, “Should we be worried about an infiltration of religious extremists?” The terrorists want us to live in fear and abandon our most sacred virtues. Can you get more iconic than the Statue of Liberty, saying, “Let them in!”

On the other hand, our adversaries do seek to infiltrate us and also motivate and inspire horrific acts.

“My father was a wandering Aramean” can also be interpreted to mean “A wandering Aramean oppressed my father.” We can choose by which text we live. Do we see ourselves as wandering Arameans or do we worry about the wandering Arameans amongst us?

Maybe, prayer will help. For those who feel free from exile, truly know the words:

א הָדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי-טוֹב:
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ.

1 'O give thanks unto the
LORD, for God is good,
for God’s mercy endures
forever.

--Psalm 107

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our monthly theme for December is Resilience, which is particularly fitting given the escalation of challenges throughout the world. Resilience is certainly not an unfamiliar topic to us Jews and is brought home with humor in a quote from Borscht Belt comedian Alan King, "They tried to kill us, we won, let's eat!"

But who could eat at a time like this? We are bombarded day after day with tragic news from abroad, from our beloved Israel and right here in the USA. Even in little ol' Hagerstown we feel enough concern to take extra security precautions at the temple with alarm system and lighting upgrades, 24/7 cameras (thank you City of Hagerstown for installing the 360° camera this summer) and even having a police presence at certain times. This is not a comfortable position for us and there is open discussion about the necessity for these measures. For the most part, though, the prevailing sentiment from temple leadership is, "better to be safe than sorry."

The B'nai Abraham community has weathered many a storm in its 123 years, some from the outside and some from within. Some long-time congregants remember a time when we were not accepted company in society and have seen so much progress in that arena. More recently, we have been faced with a dwindling number of congregants and while progress has been made, there is still a ways to go to assure our sustainability.

Yet, somehow, doing nothing has not been an option. We've used our strength of community to work through many struggles. This says to me that resilience is not a solo endeavor. We literally thank God for the strength and unity of our people, which may/should lead us to seek more and more engagement with each other within the framework of Judaism. Our religion has so much to teach us and so much for us to share with others. There exists here the opportunity for each and every one of us to discover ways to learn more about why and how incorporating our teachings into daily life allows us to persevere. Maybe it will come to you during worship, through Torah study or from a pre-school play group. The mechanism isn't as important as purposefully seeking out the lessons with each other.

This month we will celebrate Chanukah — another time when the Jewish people chose to rise up and reclaim the life that was rightfully theirs. I hope to see EVERYONE at our annual Chanukah congregational celebration and potluck dinner on Friday, December 11th at 6:00 p.m. Our participation in this traditional holiday commemoration and celebration is one way to show that resilience is an important trait to nurture together.

Shalom,

Rachel



The CBA newsletter is about to get a makeover, This is the perfect time to also give

it a name of its own. Who's got a great suggestion? "Nu News?"

Please send your suggestions to falkeg@hotmail.com and/or hrdnichols@centurylink.net

In order to save a tree or two, printed calendars are only available upon request.

Please contact Michelle in the office to arrange to pick up a copy.

Yahrzeits

<u>December 4, 2015</u>	<u>December 11 (cont.)</u>	<u>December 18 (cont.)</u>	<u>December 25 (cont.)</u>	<u>December 25 (cont.)</u>
*Harold Kopp	Judy Greenwald	Ida Garonzik	Jenny Menaged	*Louis G. Lyons
Rachel Lachman	Emanuel Lebowitz	*Esther R. Lyon	Ann Phelps	David Taylor
*Kathryn Brener	Gertrude Schiff	Lynn Markoff	Curt Schwab	Willilam E. Dirolf
Suzanne Barancik	Dr. Samuel Newman	Joseph Goldblatt	*Eric Wagshal	Laura Nathanson
Menachem Kirszenberg	Ethel Lasarow	Betty Bennett	*Rae Weiss	Jaye
Martha Fernheimer	*Rose Weiss	Irving Baron	*Josephine Auerbach	*Stella Chatkin
	David Samel	*Celia Pearl Smith	Eurene Kreiselman	Ruth Abramson
	Lena May		Faith Drabczyk	Julius Managed
<u>December 11, 2015</u>	*Benjamin Berkson	<u>December 25, 2015</u>	*Katherine Zajac	*Bertha Kramer
Simon Lasarow		Clarence Brull	Naomi Jean Bright	David Greenwald
*Abraham Pashen	<u>December 18, 2015</u>	Benjamin Forman	*Herbert Brener	*Robert B Lyons
Edna Weiner	Herman Honig	Adolph Stein	Bennet Norman	Jacob Sorkowitz
*Stanley Barbarnell	*Jennie S. Rosen	Albert Fleisher	Hollander	Jeffrey Seidman
Julius Fallas	*Shirley Chlebnikow	*Philip Thrope	Richard Abel	Mary Bloomberg

* Denotes Yahrzeit Plaque in Sanctuary

LIFELONG LEARNING

Saturday December 5 Movie Night, 7:30pm in the Baer Room. The movie: *SHANGHAI GHETTO*
Sunday December 20 Books & Bagels, 1:30pm, Place TBA. Book is: *Peony* by Pearl Buck

DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday	December 5	Movie Night (SHANGHAI GHETTO)	7:30 pm
Thursday	December 10	Latke Making Party (in the kitchen)	3:00 pm
Friday	December 11	Congregational Dinner & Chanukah Celebration	6:00 pm
Sunday	December 20	Books & Bagels	10:00 am
Thursday	December 24	Red Cross Gift Wrap @ Valley Mall	9:00 am - 5:00 pm

CARING COMMITTEE

The Caring Committee provides care, companionship and assistance to those members of our congregation and their immediate families in need, due to their health, age or non-financial crisis or catastrophe.

Chair: Sharon Metzner - receives initial calls from the rabbi. sharonmetz@aol.com, (301) 739-2972

Robbie Greenberg - for meals, as needed, robbieg56@gmail.com, (301) 797-7265

Barby Weiss - for transportation needs, barby@myactv.net, (301) 791-6098

Sharon Wagshal- for home visits or outings, sharwaq@aol.com, (301) 797-3220

NOTES FROM THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Last month the Religious School celebrated another Family Activity Day and developed a theme introduced in September and October events, namely the importance of rain and ecology in Judaism.

After the High Holidays, we relearned the story of Noah and the Flood---TOO MUCH WATER! But what happens if we do not have enough? Beginning with Shemini Atzeret and continuing until Pesach, Jews around the world add a prayer for rain to the Amidah. This is especially important for agricultural productivity in Israel. To emphasize our religious and cultural ties with the Land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael), we learned the song and accompanying dance for "Mayim, Mayim," one of the original celebrations of early pioneers (Chalutzim) when water was discovered in the desert in the 1930's. Good work, students, parents and siblings!

During prayer (Tefillah) on November 22, Rabbi introduced an interesting Hebrew vocabulary word. We sing "Hodu L'Adonai ki tov" on the High Holidays to remind ourselves to "Give thanks to Adonai, Who is good." The Hebrew word for "turkey" is "Hodu!" Could this be a reflection of Thanksgiving? Interesting to ponder...

Now onward to Chanukah!

DONATIONS

Endowment Fund

In memory of Florence Hollin

In honor of Jeanne's 90th birthday

In memory of Norman Thrope

In memory of Beth Armel

In memory of Odell Rosen

In memory of Norma Edwards, Bruce Edwards' mother

In memory of Lori Bello, Edith Edwards' mother

In memory of Lori Bello & Norma Edwards,
mothers of Edith & Bruce

by Hannah & Ed Baer

by Robin & David Handler

by Joan & Doug Becker

by Sharon Wagshal

by Joan & Doug Becker

by Amy & Bob Kerstein

by Amy & Bob Kerstein

by Amy & Bob Kerstein

by Sharon Wagshal

by Sharon Wagshal

by Joan & Doug Becker

Harold & Jeanne Jacobs Fund

In honor of Jeanne's 90th birthday

In honor of Jeanne's 90th birthday

In honor of Jeanne Jacobs

by Amy & Bob Kerstein

by Marlene & Jerry Falke

by Janet & Mansoor Emral Shaool

ONEGS - DECEMBER SCHEDULE

Friday December 4 Sheryl & Gary Greenwald, Chairs; Jessica Fitzwater

Friday December 11 Chanukah Dinner/Celebration

Friday December 18 Sandi Gagliardi, Chair; Mike Fitzgerald

Friday December 25 Randi & Scott Numbers, Chairs



CHANUKAH CELEBRATION

Friday , December 11th at 6:00 pm.

**IT'S CHANUKAH ! LIGHT THE MENORAH, SPIN THE DREIDELS,
SING SONGS, EAT LATKES!**



Celebrate with congregants at our annual Chanukah celebration. Dinner and Shabbat.
RSVP to Carole Lafferman at (240) 217- 4496 or email: claffitz@aol.com

SPRING FUNDRAISER

There will be a planning meeting for the Spring fundraiser, "90 for 90" at the Temple on December 20th at noon.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

There will be a Religious Practices meeting at the Temple on December 16 at 6 pm. If anyone would like to come to the meeting or if you have anything you would like the Religious Practices Committee to consider, please let Monda know.

Phone: (240) 291-6983 or email her at: monsansagalkin@aol.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR OUR ANNUAL RED CROSS GIFT WRAPPING

For the past 15 years Congregation B'nai Abraham has staffed the Red Cross gift wrap station in front of The Bon Ton at the Valley Mall on Christmas Eve, December 24th from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Please contact Carole Lafferman to sign up for a 3 hr. shift.

Call Carole (240) 217-4496 or e-mail: claffitz@aol.com

MIRACLE WORKERS

MIRACLE WORKER OF THE MONTH

Steve Slavick donated his time and expertise on Sunday afternoon to check and repair the dusk-to-dawn lights in our parking lot. It is members like Steve that help to keep the synagogue's expenses down.

When you see Steve, please thank him.

- Building & Grounds Committee

KVELLING

Congratulations to our new members Leah Grasso and Ben Oconis on the birth of their son Calvin Francis, Thursday, November 19. We wholeheartedly welcome you into our congregational family.

MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TODAY

Donations to the Congregation are a meaningful way to congratulate friends on Simchas or to show that you care in times of sorrow.

Contributions may be designated to any of our funds (see below). If a specific fund is not designated, the money will go into our General Fund.

For a minimum contribution of \$10.00 a printed card is sent. An individually hand-calligraphed card will be sent for any contribution of \$18.00 or more.

The minimum contribution to the Endowment Trust Fund is \$10.00

To make contributions to ANY FUND, including the CHAI CAMPAIGN, please mail or call:

*Mrs. Renee Kramer
1102 Oak Hill Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21742
(301) 733-2093*

General Fund, Endowment Fund, Cemetery Fund, Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, Young Adult Fund, Jeanne Jacobs' Senior Fund, Youth Group Fund, Sharon Wagshal Religious School Fund, 'Tree of Life', and the Adolph & Hannah Baer Trust Fund

PLANT A TREE IN ISRAEL

Planting a tree in Israel is the perfect way to show you care. You can plant trees for all occasions and help green the land of Israel while sending a special gift to a friend or loved one. For each order, a beautiful certificate of your choice is mailed to the recipient with your own personal message. Plant trees for all of these occasions: birth, Bar or Bat mitzvah, graduation, wedding, birthday, get-well wish or in memory of someone special. Over the past 100 years, JNF has planted over 250 million trees in the land of Israel. The cost per tree is \$18 with the check made out to Congregation B'nai Abraham. We have an EZTree account at JNF and Carrol will place the order for your tree(s).

For more information & to order a tree, contact Carrol Lourie at: (240) 818-7555 (cell phone) or cglourie@gmail.com

Contact Rachel Nichols to learn how you can plan a self-sustaining gift to B'nai Abraham. 240-308-1740 or HRDNichols@centurylink.net

REGULAR OFFICE HOURS: Monday, Tuesday, Friday 8:30am - 1:30pm

Michelle Jardine, Office Administrator Email: bnaiabraham1@verizon.net Office phone: (301) 733-5039

DIRECTORY - WHO TO CALL**CONTRIBUTIONS**

Renee Kramer (301) 733-2093
terrace708@myactv.net

PULPIT FLOWERS / TREES

Carrol Lourie (240) 818-7555
cglourie@gmail.com

TREE OF LIFE

Jerry Falke (301) 739-8456
falkeq@hotmail.com

Yahrzeit Plaques

Ben Chlebnikow (301) 791-6590
bchleb77@aol.com

DOR L' DOR

Joan Becker (301) 791-7175

HOSPITALIZED MEMBERS

Rabbi Plost (301) 733-5039
ariplost@gmail.com

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