



A New Beginning

If Pesach is the ultimate spring holiday in our Jewish world, then Shavuot – 50 days after the start of Pesach – ushers in our summer season with a whole new set of revelations. Shavuot commemorates the day of the handing down of the Torah from Sinai, in which a whole new beginning exists. Suddenly there are issues to think through, instructions for how the Israelites are to build their lives, and a new way forward. It opens up a world of possibilities which are exciting and somewhat unsettling because they are unknown.

This summer, I am thrilled and grateful to be starting a new beginning and a new chapter in the life of Temple Chaverim. This will include celebrating and coming together for holidays, festivals, simchas and moments of gathering. It will also

include thinking about our own new ways forward, both personally and as a community, in how we engage with one another and with those in our greater community. It might include some familiar worship, programs or experiences, and there may be some departures from “the way we have always done things,” as well. As your new rabbi, I am looking forward to uncovering together our new way of life that feels exciting, relevant, impactful and joyous. I am so honored to be with you on this journey.

Rabbi Elizabeth Zeller



The Interim has Left the Building

As you read this, I have begun my new interim rabbi position at Temple Israel in Long Beach, California, and our new senior rabbi, Rabbi Elizabeth Zeller, has begun her tenure at Temple Chaverim.

I want to take this final opportunity to express my thanks and gratitude to all of the congregants I have been privileged to meet this past year. I will always remember and appreciate the warmth and courtesy that was extended to me. This was the first time in my life I've spent any significant amount of time in New York. It was a wonderful experience, and a little different from Tulsa, OK, which boasted a total Jewish population of 2,000 Jews and where the local Walmart referred to matzoh as “Hebrew cracker bread.”



Temple Chaverim begins an exciting new chapter as Rabbi Zeller comes on board. She brings with her some very wonderful skills and abilities. I hope you will get a chance to meet her and get to know her. I wish Temple Chaverim and its members all good things as you move forward from strength to strength.

Shalom,

Rabbi Jim Simon

Cantor's Corner

Changes and a Bright Future

Ch-ch-ch-changes... The prophet David Bowie had it right: "there's gonna have to be a different [man]." The only way to truly grow, even from a place of greatness, is to embrace change. I am entering my sixteenth year with Temple Chaverim, and I have seen a lot of greatness. One of the most amazing and exciting things about to happen involves embracing both change and greatness through the people who help to make it all possible.



For starters, we are already blessed with one of the finest individuals to have the title "rabbi" next to her name. Rabbi Bennett, besides being good for the congregation, is good for all clergy. She has been a true colleague and friend to my entire family, and I am grateful for her wisdom and guidance each day. Beginning July 1, I look forward to the addition of another fantastic person to share her talents with our congregation. Rabbi Zeller has been a friend for many years prior to her hire, and now I am eager for her to be a leader in this community as she assumes the role of our next senior rabbi.

Along with this change in leadership, people have asked me how I might be handling it. I simply answer, "confidently." I believe that my strengths will join with new energy and revitalization, as well as being supported by old and familiar hands and hearts. I am committed to continuously giving my gifts with the knowledge that they will be received with respect and gratitude. I feel completely at ease working with younger colleagues because I know we will approach our work as a team. We have shared vision, shared goals and, with this kind of talent assembled, we are destined to reach many milestones for years to come.

I am also eager to work with our lay leadership in growing a culture of volunteerism and social action. I am hopeful that one of the newly adopted first tasks for the committee chairs and officers is to look to securing their successors. These will be the future leaders of our congregation, and with everyone's help, we can nurture and encourage them to continue to give with confidence that they will be well supported. Our future is bright and we have so many reasons to look forward together. I cannot wait to pray with you, to work with you, and to give you the motivation to turn up our long driveway. See you very soon at the temple.

Cantor Bradley Hyman

Fabulous Jewish Learning Experiences

Shalom and wow!! The Religious School year has whizzed by. The days are sunny and warm but we are not relaxing. We are planning our next wonderful year together. I thought I'd fill you in on some of the fabulous Jewish learning experiences we are working on for our kids.



1. **ShalomLearning** -- This is our 5th year offering this innovative option for our 5th and 6th grade students. On Sunday mornings, our **ShalomLearning** students are at home on their computers discussing different topics and relating them to Jewish values. During the week, they are continuing the discussions they had on line and participating in music with their peers, reviewing Hebrew reading and working on art projects. It's been an amazing experience for those who choose this option and we are looking forward to new conversations this fall.
2. **We can't wait to meet our new Shinshin!!** These amazing Israeli teens make Israel come alive for our students. Whether it's introducing us to gaga, a game invented in Israel, or teaching us about Israel's water issues or about Eurovision, they act as a living bridge to what being proud and Israeli is all about. Last year's Shinshin set the bar very high. I'm sure that our next Shinshin will be creative and engaging and fun.
3. **Seventh grade learning takes place outside of the classrooms!** We are fortunate to live in a community that offers us so many opportunities for Jewish experiences outside of our Temple walls. We will be meeting with Irving Roth at the Holocaust Resource Center in Temple Judea where we are fortunate to hear Mr. Roth's remarkable story of survival. Then just before Thanksgiving, our students will be stocking the shelves at the Jewish Communal Fund Food Pantry at the MidIsland Y JCC where they will be learning about food insecurity and attending a powerful play with 7th graders from local congregations. We are planning some new activities which will make our learning even more dynamic.
4. **Look for: Meet the Teacher in the Morning**– a chance for our newest members of the Chaverim family to get to know their teacher and classmates; **Religious School Movie Night**– a fun way to get to know your Hebrew school friends; **Family Workshops** and revamped **Shabbat Experiences** round out our Jewish year.

Enjoy the relaxing summer days!! See you in September!!
Debbye Brandell, Religious Education Director

President's Message

In Every Journey There is a Beginning and an End

In the spring of 2018, a search committee of approximately 40 volunteer congregants, led by past presidents Karen Bressner and Shelly Wool, set out on one of the most important tasks this congregation has been asked to do: find a rabbi to replace Rabbi Hecht. With the timing of the search and Rabbi Hecht's departure, we needed to find an interim rabbi -- someone to be a presence and "steer the ship straight" -- until a permanent or settled rabbi could be hired. The committee found someone who fit the description to a tee. Rabbi Simon came to us July 1, 2018, and made his presence felt from the beginning. His heartwarming presence on the bimah was felt; B'nei Mitzvah kids and their parents took to him. His sermons were both inspirational and educational. During his time at Temple Chaverim, more and more people attended the various programs he taught. As you can tell, Rabbi Simon was everything we looked for and more. We wish Rabbi Simon well as he embarks on his new position as the interim rabbi of Temple Israel in Long Beach, California.

As this journey comes to an end, a new one is about to begin. On July 1, Rabbi Elizabeth Zeller assumes the position as our new senior rabbi. Rabbi Zeller comes to us with a tremendous amount of expertise in youth programming and outreach. She, Rabbi Bennet and Cantor Hyman have already begun laying the framework for a new year of inspirational and exciting programs which I know will be well received.

I thank you all for your patience and understanding as we first transitioned from Rabbi Hecht to Rabbi Simon, and now transition to Rabbi Zeller. Temple Chaverim is growing and will continue to grow in new ways. With Rabbi Zeller on board, our temple boasts clergy that are second to none.

We continue to search for ways to attract new members and encourage those who left to return. To that end, we have recently rolled out aggressive pricing structures for new members and returnees. In addition, you may benefit by a dues reduction by way of referrals. For more information, please call the office. Thank you for making Temple Chaverim the thriving Reform Synagogue that it is.

Shalom,

Russell Willens, President



Be a Part of Temple Chaverim's Next Chapter and Save \$\$\$!

On July 1, Temple Chaverim will be kicking off our next chapter as we welcome Rabbi Elizabeth Zeller, our new senior rabbi. To make sure our entire community is aware of the exciting changes we have in store, we have introduced a new member/former member referral program.

You can play an essential role by helping to spread the word, and at the same time reduce YOUR dues. By simply sponsoring a new or former family, you will receive a credit equal to 25% of their dues. For example, if the new family's dues are \$1,000 for the first year, you receive a \$250 reduction in your dues. There is no limit on how much you can earn. Simply have the family you are referring mention your name when they join, and you will receive the credit. In addition, these families may be eligible for a special dues reduction the following year!

Temples are essential to the future of American Judaism. Membership forms a bond with the past, present and future of the Jewish faith and family. Our Temple has dozens of exciting educational and social activities and functions throughout the year. The membership of Temple Chaverim is vital to perpetuating all of the wonderful things that take place at Temple.

If you have any questions, please contact Eileen Schneyman, Executive Director, at 516-671-6100 or eileen@templechaverim.org.

Allen Greenbaum, Past President



A few words from the editor....

Connections is the official newsletter of Temple Chaverim. With this summer issue of 2019, we introduce a new format. Twice a year we will publish as a mini magazine containing articles and photos. The rest of the year on a bi-monthly basis each issue will include a listing of upcoming events from the Temple calendar as well as the names of our Bar and Bat Mitzvah students, new Temple members, members of Circles of Giving, a listing of Memorials and those who made Contributions to Temple Chaverim. We welcome you to join the **Connections** team or any other committee of your choice and to take part in all that Temple Chaverim has to offer.

Sheila Schroeder
Editor, **Connections**

Connections staff for this issue: Michelle Dank, Marsha Bank, Linda Greenbaum, Beryl Griliches, Pamela Kramer, Marilyn Levy, Suzanne Rabin

“That Inner Light Can Shine”

There is a story told of a boy named Ezra, the youngest child in a very talented family. He had a brother who could stand on his head and whistle and a sister who could sing beautifully. Yet Ezra felt inside that something must be missing. He wondered, “How could I possibly be special?” So, Ezra decided to try to discover what was special inside of him.

For the rest of the week, Ezra tried. He actually did some handstands with his brother, and whistled as well as he could. He tried to sing along with his sister. He helped his dad and mom with what they did best, but he still didn’t feel any sparkle.

One night though, the whole family was sitting around a beautiful campfire out on the lawn. It was so nice and so quiet that Ezra was inspired to tell a story that had been stuck inside his head for so long. There were villains in it, and good people in it, and there was a monster. There were shadows. There was excitement. There was great drama in it. And as Ezra told this story that had been stuck inside his head for so long, everyone in the family stopped whatever they were doing to listen. Ezra’s brother came in and stopped doing his handstands. His sister stopped singing. Everyone just listened. He told the whole story. There was total silence at the end.

And wouldn’t you know it. Ezra felt a kind of shiver of excitement. In that moment of quiet, Ezra discovered a piece of who he was and how he himself could shine.

There are many reasons I could provide for why every teen at Chaverim should join **Tuesday Night Live (TNL)**. Our 8th through 12th graders explore who they are as Jews and how Jewish traditions can help

guide them in their lives. They learn how to be leaders and set examples for their peers. They learn about important topics to them through a Jewish lens, and they have fun! But, to describe each of these essential pieces of our **TNL** program leaves out something remarkable. What I hear over and over again from our **TNL** students is the following: In the midst of years that are filled with growth and challenges, from beginning high school to considering a future beyond, our teens find at **TNL** a place where they can be themselves and where they can escape from the stresses of their days to be with a community that accepts and embraces them. What a gift for each of our teens to find a place when they need it most, to be most fully who they are or become most fully who they have yet to be.

We invite all 8th through 12th graders to become a part of this remarkable program and to find their place in **TNL** and at Chaverim. So in three or four or even five years, that inner light can shine, like Ezra’s, as they relate how they found a place at **TNL** to be who they really are.

Mazel tov to our incoming **TNL Board**:

Co-Presidents: Dalia Lieberman and Jillian Max

Vice President: Nathan Blank

Membership and Communications: Carly Hersch, Alyssa Riefer and Gabby Sorgie

NFTY Representative: Jenna Rabin

Trustees: Chris Brickel, Brian Lustig, Alexa Makowsky, Rachel Pasternack, Sivan Plotkin

Rabbi Debra Bennet

