

Congregation Beth Am



November 2018

Cheshvan-Kislev 5779

Welcome Back, Rabbi Marcy!

Rabbi Marcy Greene returns to Congregation Beth Am on Saturday, Nov. 17, *Parshat Vayetze*. She will also be in San Antonio for Shabbat services on Dec. 8, *Shabbat Chanukah*.

First Friday Kabbalat Shabbat

November's Kabbalat Shabbat will be at the home of Lenny and Marianne Kestenbaum on Friday, Nov. 2, at 6:30 p.m. Please bring a pareve or dairy dish to share as we celebrate and eat together.

There will be no First Friday observance in December – due to our annual Chanukah party on the evening of Sunday, Dec. 2. (see below)

We will observe Chol ha-Moed Chanukah with services on Saturday, Dec. 8.

Chanukah is Coming!

Congregation Beth Am's annual Chanukah party is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 2, at 4 p.m., at the home of Mike and Evelyn Roth, 1118 Custer Pass.

All who attend should bring a dairy or pareve item for dinner as well as a Chanukiah and candles. It is essential to RSVP to the Roths at either 210/496-0742 or at mroth@satx.rr.com, and share what you plan to bring, so that they can plan the menu.

Thank You

To those who helped with Shabbat and Yom Tov services in October: Henry Bernstein, Marion Bernstein, Meredith Fox, Peter Janes, Gary Kurzban and Nancy Oseasohn.

To those who provided kiddush in October: Rona Aduna, and Marianne and Lenny Kestenbaum.

To Rhoda Rappaport, who hosted us at her home for First Friday in October.

Mazal Tov

To Gary Kurzban and Terry Ruiz on the marriage last month of their son, Fredrick Kurzban, to Natali Noriega.

To Rhoda Rappaport on her 92nd birthday!



**RECONSTRUCTING
JUDAISM**

Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.

Contributions to Congregation Beth Am should be sent to Rhoda Rappaport, 16942 Summer Creek Dr., SAT 78248-1409.

In the Community

SAJSS to Host Israeli Comedian

San Antonio Jewish Senior Services will hold a luncheon featuring Joel Chasnoff, an Israeli stand-up comic, at noon on Wednesday, Nov. 7, at Congregation Rodfei Sholom.

The event celebrates the 50th anniversary of the organization formerly known as Golden Manor. Reservations, at \$75 per person, may be made by calling 210/616-4811.

Kosher Bar-B-Q at Agudas

The Texas Kosher BBQ Championship at Congregation Agudas Achim will be held on Sunday, Nov. 11, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tickets may be purchased on line.

Catholic-Jewish Chanukah Lunch

The annual Chanukah event bringing together the Jewish and Catholic communities will be at 11:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 6, at San Fernando Cathedral Hall, 231 W. Commerce. The guest speaker will be Sister Mary C. Boys, vice-president and dean of Union Theological Seminary, an expert on Catholic-Jewish relations.

For more information and to purchase tickets, contact the Jewish Federation of San Antonio.

Two Dates to Remember in November:

Nov. 4 – “fall back” to standard time

Nov. 6 – Election Day

Statement on the Pittsburgh Synagogue Massacre

Reconstructing Judaism and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association mourn the devastating losses that a white nationalist domestic terrorist inflicted upon the Jewish community on Shabbat morning Oct. 27 at [Tree of Life - Or L'Simcha Congregation](#) in Pittsburgh. Included among the dead and wounded are members of our affiliate, [Congregation Dor Hadash](#), which meets there.

Within the Reconstructionist community, we are heartbroken over the death of Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz, a widely loved Dor Hadash member and [a physician with a warm heart and caring practice](#). Jerry and his wife, Miri, served Dor Hadash as co-presidents. We offer our deepest condolences to Miri, to Jerry's mother, Sally, to his siblings and his other loved ones. We also send condolences to Rabbi Sandra Berliner (RRC '85), whose cousins, Cecil and David Rosenthal, were among the Tree of Life – Or L'Simcha members who were killed. And to the loved ones of all who were murdered in the synagogue, we offer our profound condolences and our solidarity.

We ask that everyone add the name of [Dan Leger](#) to your healing prayer lists. Dan, a longtime lay leader at Dor Hadash, was shot multiple times and is in serious condition after undergoing several surgeries. His Hebrew name, for the purposes of prayers for healing, is *Daniel ben Sarah Miriam*. We are holding in our hearts all of Dan's family and loved ones. Two of his close friends, Rabbi Yitzhak Husbands-Hankin, Rabbi Emeritus of our affiliate in Eugene, Oregon, and Shonna Husbands-Hankin, were visiting the synagogue over the weekend, and they have been staying nearby and praying for Dan's recovery.

Please also pray for the healing of the four police officers who were wounded as they responded to the calls for help from Tree of Life - Or L'Simcha Congregation. SWAT Officer Tim Matson and three other Pittsburgh police officers were injured in the attack. If the names of the other officers are released, we will pass them along to our affiliated congregations.

We offer gratitude to Rabbi Doris Dyen (RRC '13), a Dor Hadash member who has been providing crisis pastoral counseling on the scene, and to all who have taken on the crucial work of providing emotional, spiritual, and practical support to those in need. Rabbi Doris and her husband, Prof. Deane L. Root, were on their way to the synagogue when the attack took place. We wish them strength and serenity of spirit.

We are also extremely grateful to the first re-

sponders who, with great bravery and professionalism, rushed to the aid of a synagogue under attack.

We pray for strength and courage for Rabbi Jeffrey Myers, Rabbi Jonathan Perlman, and for all of the staff, lay leaders, and community members at Tree of Life – Or L'Simcha who are devoting their energies to supporting one another at this time.

Dor Hadash, National Refugee Shabbat, and our Jewish Values

Our Reconstructionist affiliate, Dor Hadash, along with more than 300 other congregations nationwide (including about 30 from our movement), took part on Oct. 20 in [National Refugee Shabbat](#), an initiative organized by [HIAS](#). HIAS is a Jewish-American non-profit organization that provides support and advocacy on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in need. HIAS began as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and from the 1880s onward, HIAS helped thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing pogroms and later, Nazism, as they sought refuge in the U.S. Today, HIAS advocates primarily for non-Jewish refugees and asylum seekers, a target of hate from white nationalists. The shooter, Robert Bowers, attacked HIAS repeatedly on social media, and in a message he posted shortly before the shooting, he “thanked” HIAS for providing a list of synagogues that took part in National Refugee Shabbat. [Dor Hadash was listed as a participant in the HIAS initiative](#).

As a movement, we stand firmly with HIAS, and we believe in the Jewish values that undergird their work on behalf of refugees today, the vast majority of whom are not Jewish. As HIAS's CEO, Mark Hetfield, often puts it, “At HIAS we used to help refugees because they were Jews. Now, we help refugees because we are Jews.” Amen.

We will not be deterred from our commitment to remember the stranger, to empathize with refugees, and to pursue immigration policies of generosity and compassion towards those who come to our borders seeking asylum or refuge. Our spiritual and moral roots in the journey of Abraham and Sarah, our migrant ancestors, compel us to take this stand. Our formation as a people fleeing slavery in Egypt commands us to care for those who seek to escape hellish places today. Our history of forced expulsions, pogroms and genocide gives shape to the empathy in our hearts. We are proud of Dor Hadash's participation in National Refugee Shabbat, and we will continue to advo-

cate as a movement for our vision of a shared society in which diversity is celebrated and white supremacy defeated.

Of course, regardless of what may have drawn Robert Bowers to Tree of Life - Or L'Simcha Congregation on this past Shabbat, in the end he did not ask for each victim's views about immigration before he opened fire at them. His reported statements made it very clear that he attacked them because they were Jews.

We recognize and condemn the white nationalist ideology that the perpetrator embraced – a toxic belief system that demonizes non-white immigrants, hates Muslims, hates people of color, and promotes the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory of a Jewish cabal running things behind the scenes. We call on the Trump Administration to emphatically condemn white supremacy and the white nationalist movement, and to stop, once and for all, demonizing immigrants and using dog whistles to generate hatred towards religious and racial minorities. [The white nationalist movement has found encouragement](#) in the language and messages that have been coming from the White House, and as the rabbinic tradition teaches very clearly, words are weapons and have the power to destroy. We ask people of all political parties to call upon the Trump Administration to stop using the language of “us vs. them,” the language of ridicule and mob anger. One can hold conservative, moderate or progressive views without engaging in any of these damaging and inciting uses of language in the public square. Indeed, the future of America's viability as a healthy democracy depends upon it.

While raising our voices in prayer and condolences for the victims this latest mass shooting, we also raise our voices to call for the enactment and enforcement of reasonable gun laws throughout this country that would help prevent such tragedies. [There have been almost 300 mass shootings in the United States in 2018.](#)

Ways We Can Help

Many people are asking what they can do to help. There are a few options. Donations to the Dor Hadash can be made online [here](#). Donations to help all the Tree of Life – Or L'Simcha victims and their families can be made [here](#). A fund has been set up to help the officers who were injured in the synagogue shooting. It's called the Injured Officers' Fund, and instructions for how you can donate to it are [here](#).

We know that many of us would like to make phone calls or send emails to offer condolences

and moral support, and we also recognize that the next few days are likely to be overwhelming for everyone at Dor Hadash. In the meantime, one meaningful action that Reconstructionist communities can take is to send cards and letters to Congregation Dor Hadash, 5898 Wilkins Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15217.

Loss, Shock, and the Enduring Nature of Hope

This attack has shaken the entire Jewish community, in North America, Europe, Israel and everywhere that Jews live. We urge people who are experiencing trauma, fear, anxiety or other difficulties coping to turn to each other and to trusted and reliable sources of comfort and counsel. Therapists, rabbis, pastoral counselors and friends can help us make our way through.

We draw strength and hope from the loving outreach that has come to the Jewish community from people of so many faith traditions and walks of life. We are touched by initiatives like [“Muslims Unite for Pittsburgh Synagogue,”](#) which has raised over \$100,000 to benefit the victims and their families. In our *siddurim*, we sometimes sing these ancient words: *min ha-meytzar karati Yah, anani va-merkhav Yah*. “From the narrow places I called out to the Merciful One; God answered me from a place of expansiveness.” (Ps. 118:5) When we reach across faith lines to support one another, when we stand up for the vulnerable and the rejected, and when we see the Divine image in every human being, we bring into being that expansive, inclusive, healing Divine love. This is how we will survive, and ultimately help America realize the potential of its motto, *E pluribus unum*, “Out of many, one.”

L'Shalom,

Deborah Waxman, Ph.D., *President*, Reconstructing Judaism
Seth Rosen, *Chair*, Board of Governors, Reconstructing Judaism

Rabbi Elyse Wechterman, *Executive Director*, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

Rabbi Seth Goldstein, *President*, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

Yahrzeits

26 Heshvan (Nov. 4) Ida Lindheim, congregant

5 Kislev (Nov. 13) Benjamin Schwartzman, grandfather of Gary Kurzban

9 Kislev (Nov. 17) Frederick Kurzban, grandfather of Gary Kurzban

10 Kislev (Nov. 18) Betty Berkowitz, mother of Karen Berkowitz

10 Kislev (Nov. 18) Betty Hilton, sister-in-law of Sylvia Hilton

11 Kislev (Nov. 19) Walburga von Raffler-Engel, mother of Robert Engel

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NOVEMBER SHABBAT SERVICES

☆ *Saturday services are at 10 a.m. in the Thoreau Building, UUC, 7150 IH-10 West.* ☆

Nov. 2: *First Friday Kabbalat Shabbat*, 6:30 p.m. at the home of Marianne & Lenny Kestenbaum

Nov. 10: *Toldot* Gabbai: Gary Kurzban; Shaliach Tzibbur: Marion Bernstein; Torah: Gary Kurzban; Haftarah: TBA; D'var Torah: Rhoda Rappaport; Kiddush: Marge Gregerman

Nov. 17: *VaYetze* Gabbai: Gary Kurzban; Shaliach Tzibbur: Marion Bernstein; Torah: Rabbi Marcy Greene; Haftarah: Karen Berkowitz; D'var Torah: Rabbi Marcy; Kiddush: the Kurzban-Ruiz family

Dec. 8: *Miketz/Chanukah* Gabbai: TBA; Shaliach Tzibbur & Hallel: TBA; Torah: Rabbi Marcy Greene; Haftarah: TBA; D'var Torah: Rabbi Marcy; Kiddush: TBA

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