



## Mark Your Calendar!

- Friday, Dec. 2, 7:45 p.m.  
Shabbat Service - Oneg
- Sunday, Dec. 4  
10:30 a.m. Confirmation  
12:30-2:30 p.m.  
Taste of Judaism
- Monday, Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m.  
Board Meeting
- Sunday, Dec. 11  
9:30 a.m. Men's Club meeting  
10:45 a.m. Pirke Avot  
12:30-2:30 p.m.  
Taste of Judaism  
3:00 p.m. Service for Healing
- Friday, Dec. 16, 7:45 p.m.  
New Member/Family Shabbat  
Service (Cantor) - Oneg
- Saturday, Dec. 17, 10:30 a.m.  
Torah Study
- Sunday, Dec. 25 & Jan 1  
No Sunday School
- Calendar correction: There will not be any Shabbat services on June 2 or 3. Instead, We will hold Friday Shabbat services on June 9.

## Rabbi's Message

I participated in my first Healing Service about ten years ago at a UAHC Biennial and have been part of many more since then. I had forgotten any apprehension I might have felt until a Temple member asked me: "For whom is the service intended? People who are seriously and/or chronically ill, sick at heart, recently injured?" She wondered if she should attend or if she would be uncomfortable. I am grateful to her for reminding me that Healing Services are so new that they require some explaining.

*"What is a healing service? The simplest definition is: any service where healing takes place. A service of healing provides a place to pray, reflect and meditate. It makes a communal connection for those who are coping with illness, trauma, assault, grief or for families, caretakers, loved ones of those who need healing. For our purpose, it consists of Jewish liturgy (niggunim, psalms, blessings, prayers and Kaddish) and may include non-traditional activities such as communal sharing or stories. At the service one may gain spiritual strength through listening, reflection, meditation and prayers or just by knowing that you are not the only one on such a journey."*

*Chris and Dave Wattenberg, Healing/Spirituality Network of CAJE*

*continued on next page*

## President's Message

In the two and one half years that I have been president, I have gone from some one who had an idea about how our synagogue runs to one who understands that this is a very complicated place. More goes on behind the scenes than I ever thought was possible. The work of our volunteers always amazes me. We have people running around making sure the school is running, the services are prepared, the onegs are hosted, the supplies are ordered, the building is taken care of, that the finances are taken care of and that we have enough money to do all of these things. We have people looking for new members, talking to old members, advertising and publicizing events, educating our adults and teaching us how to do all of this with a Jewish perspective. We teach our congregation to get involved in the outside world, as our involvement in the ambulance and Pups for Peace program have shown, as well as our gathering supplies for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. And we do this with a roster of around 75 families.

It truly amazes me how our small congregation can do so much giving from the heart. If you stopped by at a board meeting, which you are welcome to at any time, you would see 13 people smiling. Even though we have some discussions where we do not agree (see 2 Jews, 3 opinions joke), these board meetings for me are like family reunions. I actually look forward to them because I get to interact with such wonderful people. I truly believe that this all flows from two things, a good strong Jewish background in at least one family member and the teachings of Rabbi Lewis. How our little shul in Washington was able to attract and keep a wonderful rabbi is something that we need to all be very proud of, because she sees the best in us, all the potential we have and is able to bring it out of us.

I want you all to know that I am thankful for everyone who helps out at the temple. This is your gift to me, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Howie

## ***Rabbi's Message, cont.***

Our Healing Service is for anyone and everyone, for the sick and the ones who care for the sick, for the recovering and the healthy, for those who want to feel the support of the community and for those who want to do the supporting.

*"What is Healing? For this discussion we use it is a journey. It takes a person from where they are to a place of ease, from dis-ease to ease. Some think that healing means to return to where they were before the problem, whatever that problem is, started. They can never get back to that point, in fact they can never get back to where they were five minutes ago. At the end of a healing journey they should be better than they were when they started."* Chris and Dave Wattenberg

What if you don't feel like you personally are in need of healing? Then come for those who need you.

*"Who are healers? Anyone can be a healer. Most people are healers and are not aware or refuse to use the title. A parent who hugs an injured child and makes them feel better so that they can start the healing process, is a healer. The friend who attends a house of shiva, so that the people know they are being supported and can start to move on in their lives, is a healer. The teacher, who helps a student to realize his or her special gifts and starts to rebuild self esteem, is a healer."* Chris and Dave Wattenberg

When I first heard about the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey, the regional director told me, "They only have services every other Friday night, but they come!" This is a worshipping congregation. Our services always include prayers for healing in which we all participate. This service will be no different that way, although the liturgy itself will be different. Come to this service as you would to any other. This congregation has always been an accessible one spiritually; come celebrate the new accessibility of our building.

Rabbi Ellen Lewis

## ***Service for Healing***

Please join us on **December 11 at 3 p.m.** as we dedicate and celebrate our new lift with a Service for Healing. The service will not be a traditional liturgical service but will instead contain prayers for healing, related readings and some new melodies. The service, which will be conducted by Rabbi Lewis along with Steve Kunzman on guitar, is also being offered as part of Ohr Tikvah, the Healing Center, which operates under the auspices of the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren Counties, and is open to the entire community. There will be refreshments in the simcha room following the service.

The children in the Sunday School music program are preparing two pieces to sing as part of the service, so do come and hear what they have learned.

## ***Hunterdon Developmental Center Collection***

We will be collecting CDs for Hanukkah for the Hunterdon Developmental Center. They would like easy listening music, country classics, etc. The center has about 40-45 residents. We will need them by 12/11. You can find a box in the lobby.

## ***How to Raise a Jewish Child***

*"For anyone who has a child, was a child, or cares about children. Wendy Mogel teaches you how to raise a child to be a good person and not just raise a child to feel good. Great for the Jewish parent, great for the Presbyterian parent, the Buddhist, even the skeptic."* - Carrie Fisher

On Sunday morning **January 15**, Rabbi Lewis will lead a discussion on Wendy Mogel's book, *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Self-Reliant Children*. Dr. Mogel is a clinical psychologist in Los Angeles who tries, with authority and humor, to help parents learn how to turn their children's worst traits into their greatest attributes. Her goal is to help parents see and treasure both the ordinariness and the uniqueness of their children. She uses Jewish sources to help parents teach children how to honor their parents and respect others. The book is published by Scribner and can be found easily in most bookstores.

Come at 10 for coffee followed by a discussion beginning at 10:30. Do read the book, but come even if you haven't read it.

## ***Construction Update***

As of November 21 our lift is operational and legal. We passed the state of New Jersey inspection. If you have any problems with the operation of the lift, please call me. During the next few weeks as we have temple functions, I will demonstrate the operation of the lift. It is not very complicated, but there are a few things that you may need to know. The building renovation is complete except for a new front door. I have been having trouble getting a nice looking door, with sidelights and a transom at a price that I found reasonable, so we are continuing to look at doors. The men's handicapped bathroom is complete. We do need to add a mirror above the sink and a hook for coats.

Thank you for your patience and understanding in improving the building.

Howie Hirsch

## ***Catching Up at the Jewish Center***

The fall has been a very busy season. The High Holidays were marked by profound sermons delivered by Rabbi Lewis, who addressed the political and social implications of "our confusion about how to reconcile our scientific understanding of creation and the biblical stories of creation," and who reminded us repeatedly that we must take action in the world around us, for example: "We can no longer close our eyes to Darfur and other places in the world where the image of God is defiled every day in the way people are treated. If we see God only as a paternal or maternal figure whose job it is to take care of us, we are in danger of seeing ourselves as passive receptors of God's largesse. If we see ourselves as God's other half, however, we feel compelled to do God's work in the world." Student Cantor Karen Neff led the congregation in worshipful song, her glorious voice transporting us outside ourselves and deep into ourselves, sometimes both simultaneously. The musical skills of Helene Friedlander on keyboard and Steve Kunzman on guitar

contributed to the special atmosphere of the worship. Members and guests filled the simcha room for the break-the-fast potluck supper at sundown on Yom Kippur (kugels, blintzes, salads, bagels; if you're someone who's never come, there's always next year).

Each of our five b'nai mitzvah services was quite remarkable in its own way: Our children—all educated in our cooperative Sunday School—made us proud. These young people are competent in Hebrew, poised in front of the congregation, and able to think independently. For instance, you know you are doing something right in Sunday School (thank you, teachers, parents, and PTO) and tutorials when a young person's b'nai mitzvah speech contains a serious discussion of free will. We welcome all of them to our community and again send hearty mazel tovs to their families.

Jewish education at the Center is not limited to our children. The ongoing monthly Torah study group, now in its seventh year (having spent six on the book of Genesis), is engaging in discussion and analysis of Exodus, wrestling with questions about Moses, God, and Pharaoh. The Sunday morning monthly Pirke Avot [Wisdom (or Sayings) of the Sages (or Fathers)] class, taught by Rabbi Lewis, confronts the early rabbinic period, whose leaders were asking many of the same questions that face us today; most important, perhaps, is the question raised by Judah Ha Nasi: what is the right path through life? If you have never attended either of these ongoing study groups, why not try one sometime? (See the newsletter calendar for the dates and times.)

Rabbi Lewis is also teaching a three-session class titled "A Taste of Judaism," aimed at temple members who would like to refresh some basics and at the community-at-large, both Jewish and gentile. The turnout and reception for the first session, on God, was extraordinary. In attendance are several couples who are members of the Center and non-members who were born Jewish but were never taught about Judaism; there are others who feel an affinity with Judaism and are considering conversion, and still others who are committed Christians interested in learning more about their Jewish neighbors. These sessions (preceded by lunch) provide a welcoming atmosphere and a gifted teacher, Rabbi Lewis, who is answering questions that touch on the deepest needs a person may have. It is possible that some of the seekers in this class will eventually want to join us as members. They have been invited to attend services. Remember that we are commanded to welcome the stranger.

Last but not least in this update, a special Shabbat dinner was held for a group consisting of new members and board members and spouses. The simcha room was transformed by the elegant table setting, and two pairs of silver candlesticks; smaller pairs of candles were provided so that each of the women could say the b'racha. Because this dinner was intentionally scheduled on a Friday night when there was no service, we were able to spend several hours and begin to get to know one another.

## Adult Programs

*Torah Study:* Meeting dates (check with Sharon Herson if you are coming for the first time or if you missed the last meeting): Saturday mornings — Dec. 17, Jan. 14, Feb. 11, March 11, April 15, May 13, June–Aug. TBA. Starting time is 10:30 a.m., ending time is usually 12:30-1:00 p.m.

*Pirke Avot:* This collection of very short texts, The Sayings of the Elders, provides an endless source of both wisdom and controversy. Upcoming dates: Dec. 11, Jan. 8, Feb. 5, March 19, April 30. Let Rabbi Lewis know if you plan to attend.

## Education Committee and PTO News

Come shop the Hanukkah Boutique! We've got it all: candles, dreidls, gelt, cookies, menorahs, gift items and more. Dates for the boutique are **December 2, 4, 11, 16 & 18.**

The PTO is selling Yahrzeit electric memorials. Order forms are enclosed in this month's newsletter. Please complete the form and mail to Jean Berkowitz by December 18. Our next PTO meeting will be **Sunday, January 15** at 9:30 a.m.

There will be no Sunday School on **December 25 and January 1.**

**Confirmation Retreat:** The Confirmation Class is going to Camp Harlam for our annual retreat **Jan. 27-29, 2006.** We do have room for a few "alumni/ae" of the prior Confirmation years, so let Rabbi Lewis know if you are interested in coming along. Chaperones for the trip are young adults who must have graduated from high school; if you are interested in chaperoning, contact Rabbi Lewis.

## Support the Jewish Center with Scrip

We are once again selling scrip! Lynn Kowski has been kind enough to volunteer. She is available every Sunday at the Temple that Sunday School meets at 11:45 a.m.



In honor of Rabbi Lewis  
Scholar  
Role Model  
Teacher  
Guide  
Woman  
Leader  
Dedicated Rabbi

for the quality and depth and vision shared with  
Sam and Julie and the entire family during our  
B'nai Mitzvah Education & Ceremony



## To Our 2006-2007 B'nai Mitzvah Families

The Jewish Center will hold a brunch for you, including all your children, on February 5, 2006, after Sunday school. At this time Rabbi Lewis will address issues and concerns you may have regarding your child's upcoming simcha. Information regarding your child's date and what your child needs to know will be addressed as well. Each family will receive a packet of information to take home with you to read and digest. We are looking forward to meeting with you on this date. Please set aside this date and time so that you can attend. We should be finished by 2 pm.

Helen Mattson and Ritual Committee



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