HUMILITY: The Most Important Trait of All

DO you talk too much or too little in a crowd? Do you occupy the rightful space at home or in the office? Do you post too much or not enough on social media? This past year, a group of Temple members gathered together with your clergy to answer these questions. For one semester, we studied Mussar, a spiritual perspective and discipline of transformative practices that became popular in the 19th century. In Mussar, we use the image of a spiritual ladder—the rungs of the ladder are the traits of the inner life. Each rung is a mididah (a soul trait or virtue) such as kindness, generosity, forgiveness, and honor. Each person has a spiritual curriculum—our ability to find our traits and ascend the ladder of holiness. Humility is the first soul trait because the ego covers every aspect of our lives.

Think of it this way: life is a mission, and when we go on a mission we need equipment. God gives us the tools and talents we need to accomplish our unique mission in life. Moses, for example, had to have been supplied with some weighty spiritual equipment to enable him to succeed on his mission of getting the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. Alan Morinis teaches us that these gifts are on loan, borrowed tools. In life, we must be careful not to confuse our own selves with the tasks accomplished with our borrowed tools. In life, we must recognize our special gifts but also be humble in recognizing that we are recipients of those gifts.

When we are humble, we occupy the space in our lives that fits who we are—neither claiming more than is appropriate for us nor shrinking from occupying our rightful space. Finding that balance is the key to living with humility. The opposite of humility is not arrogance. Humility is a balanced and moderate trait which helps us figure out where we fit in, how much space we occupy in the world, and not everyone is meant to occupy the same space. None of us, after all, is Moses!

Yet, Moses is still our best teacher. The only character description of Moses in the Torah is that he is the most humble man on earth. The rabbis declare that the Torah was given on Sinai, a small mountain, to teach us humility. A later scholar asks: If the lesson is humility, why was the Torah not given in a valley? The answer is because the idea is not to teach humility in one without merit; instead, we should be a mountain, have gifts, burst with talent, and still humble—that is achievement!

Our society seems to reject the value of humility at every juncture. The abundance of reality television shows have characters who are encouraged to boast about their talents. Politicians do it too. Wherever we turn, humility is seen as equivalent to low self-esteem, a great failure. While the rabbis ask—who is wise? The one who learns from all people. Our society does not seem to resonate with this idea.

A wise scholar once said, “If the Messiah should come and say to me, ‘You are better than others,’ I would say, ‘You are not the Messiah.’” When it comes to our curriculum of life, humility is the most important virtue of all. Let us never forget that true humility is not a reflection of the idea that we are worthless; rather, it is the opposite. It is a reflection of the certainty that we are each invaluable, blessed, and created in the image of God.
**Mazal Tov!**

- Inaugural New Israel Fund Award (Atlanta Region) to Janice R. Blumenthal for supporting Civil Rights
- Shirley and Stanley Rawn married 70 years
- Colette Ann Bernstein and Daniel Ross Walker on their marriage
- Victoria Davis & Todd Schmidt on their marriage and to Todd’s parents Nancy & Dave Schmidt
- Nat Gozansky on retiring from Emory Law after 45 years

**B’nei Mitzvah**

**ISABELLE FISHBEIN**  
Daughter of Melissa & Daniel Fishbein

**MAX FISHBEIN**  
Son of Melissa & Daniel Fishbein

**ISABELLE ROSE FISHBEIN**  
Daughter of Melissa & Daniel Fishbein

**BENJAMIN XAVIER ACKERMAN**  
Son of Amber & Jeremy Ackerman

**BENJAMIN A. JOHNSON**  
Son of Jennifer & Ben Johnson

**RACHEL NICOLE DOMAN**  
Daughter of Laura & Alexander Doman

**ELLE JACQUELINE AFERIAT**  
Daughter of Stephanie & David Aferiat

**QUENTIN LEE ALTERMAN**  
Son of Leslie & Scott Alterman

**RACHEL NICOLE DOMAN**  
Daughter of Laura & Alexander Doman

**GABRIELLE ROSE FISHBEIN**  
Daughter of Melissa & Daniel Fishbein

**MARCUS ARMISTEAD JOHNSON**  
Son of Jennifer & Ben Johnson

**ETHAN HUNTER JOYCE**  
Son of Monique & Stephen Joyce

Our Heartfelt Sympathy to the Families of:

- Frances Sternick  
  (mother of Lisa Kilinc)
- Jeanne Herzog (mother of Patricia Jacobs & Richard Herzog, Sr.)
- Denise Garnier  
  (Mother of Mariella Volio)
- Rochelle Kaye (mother of David Kaye)
- Dede Cohen  
  (mother of Jeffrey Cohen)
- June Restler (Mother of Don Restler)
- Irving Liverman  
  (grandfather of Remy Liverman)
- Gabrielle Azar-Levin  
  (mother of Philip Azar)
- Leonard S. London  
  (father of Debbie Wedler)
- Dr. Ronald Witchel  
  (father of Tonya Witchel)

**Our Newest Members**

- Eydie Merwitzer

**Mazal tov to our 2017/5777 Adult B’nei Mitzvah Class**

Left to right: Cantor Deborah Hartman, Scott Morris, Gail Ripans, Wendy Heaps, Jennifer Kellett, Elizabeth Webster, Selena Bauman, Yang Yang, Ellen Frauenthal, Jack Rosenthal, Cecile Prager, Rabbi Steven Rau.

**May Their Memory Be For A Blessing**

- Live B’nei Mitzvah in Israel  
  The celebrations highlighted in beige will take place on July 17 in Israel.
  See back cover for the link to watch the B’nei Mitzvah Livestream.
Young Professionals Programs

THE WELL
Friday, June 2 @ 8:00 PM
Join Rabbi David Spinrad, Sammy Rosenbaum, and our musicians for our monthly Young Professionals Shabbat Service. The Well is a continuing evolution and experiment in Jewish prayer that strives to be resonant and inclusive for people of all levels of familiarity and comfort with the service and with Judaism. Gather with us in the Covenant Chapel as we sing and pray and talk about what we aspire to be: A valued center of Jewish community where we have the opportunity to connect to something greater than ourselves and fulfill our potential as a community.

Infant-Toddler Programs at The Temple

MINI SHABBATS WITH A SPLASH
Saturdays, June 10, July 8, and August 12
9:30 AM Service • 10:00 AM Bagels, Coffee, and Splash Pad
Join us ALL SUMMER LONG every second Saturday for a Shabbat experience for our tiniest tots. We will celebrate Shabbat together with a short service led with the help of our puppet friends. We are thrilled to be partnering with PJ Library to learn through Jewish stories about doing mitzvahs and making the world a better place. The service is followed by bagels and coffee with new friends and time splashing around in our playground's splash pad. Feel free to dress casually and don’t forget your bathing suits, towels, and sunscreen. And bring a friend—we love to welcome new people into our growing Temple family.

There is no fee or RSVP required. Questions? As always, please contact us: Rabbi Loren Lapidus (llapidus@the-temple.org) or Rabbi Lydia Medwin (lmedwin@the-temple.org).

Shabbat, mitzvahs, bagels and coffee, friends and sun and splash? An unbeatable combination. We can’t wait to see you there!

Caring at The Temple

Our Caring at The Temple program reaches out to fellow congregants during times of hardship or pastoral need, providing homemade chicken soup and challah to members who are bereaved, ill, recently discharged from the hospital, or are celebrating the arrival of a new child. We have delivered more than 500 soups, and nearly every step of the program—from soup preparation, to delivery (within your zip code), to letting us know about fellow congregants in need—is led by members of our congregation.

Thank you to our Caring at The Temple volunteers who delivered soup this month: Barbara Abend, Susan Banner, Joyce Bihary, Gary Capilouto, Scott Chalk, Sandy & Duane Cox, Cyndee Dubroff, Ellen Frauenthal, Randy Hyman, Robbie Levin, Barbara & Ron Lipp, Caki Mendel, Ellen Rafshoon, Debbie Shelton, Jill Spasser, Marcy Solomon, Ronnie van Gelder, Bobbi Wilson.

To be a part of this program and to fulfill the mitzvah of bikkur cholim (visiting the sick) or to let us know who needs soup, please contact Rabbi Lydia Medwin at lmedwin@the-temple.org or 404-873-1731.

Library News

Our Temple Library is open all summer long. It’s a wonderful place to explore.

If you want a quick read, there are short stories, poetry and essays in the 800 section. Looking for a mystery? We have Daniel Silva, Kellerman, and many other mystery writers on the Fiction shelves. There are interesting people to read about in Biography. We have lots of books on almost every aspect of Judaism throughout Non-Fiction. Those shelves are labeled to help you find what you are looking for.


We Need You For a Mitzvah

Now that school is out, what a great mitzvah for your children to go with you and take soup and challah to our congregants who are ill, shut in, have just had a new addition to their family or lost a loved one. Not only will your children enjoy giving out the bag of soup, but so will the person who receives it.

It’s people like you—individuals willing to reach out with a warm heart and a helping hand to deliver homemade soup and challah to those in our Temple community—that create a caring community.

If you would like to become part of the caring congregation, please email Joya Schmidt at jschmidt@the-temple.org or Rabbi Lydia Medwin at lmedwin@the-temple.org or call The Temple office (404) 873-1731.

Join Rabbi Peter Berg on the Adventure of a Lifetime in Argentina!

March 13-17, 2018

• Explore Buenos Aires from the regal architecture, including the Government House & the National Congress, to the lively culture & nightlife
• Meet with leaders from the Buenos Aires Jewish community
• Visit Plaza de Mayo, scene of countless political demonstrations
• Stroll through the Jewish neighborhoods of Once and Abasto
• Enjoy fun and interactive dining at the Argentine Experience
• Experience the Gaucho (Argentinian cowboy) way of life
• Tour Tigre and take a Parana River Delta cruise
• Learn to Tango and take in a live Tango show
• Discover the beautiful Iguazu Falls National Park… and so much more!


Be a part of the Israel Experience 2017

We will be livestreaming services from Israel at 10:30am on Saturday, June 17th. Check it out! www.the-temple.org/israel2017.
Searching For New Group Leaders

Over the past few years, we have been blown away by the incredible enthusiasm for small groups. We celebrated over 60 small groups this past year, groups that ranged from hiking in the mountains to playing Mah Jongg at The Temple, from social justice to Jewish learning. We cannot wait to start our third year of small groups. Summer is the time when we begin the process of gathering new leaders so that we can begin in the fall. So…

If you want to start a group, and you have two other friends who’ll join you, you can be a group leader! Your group can do almost anything – go to concerts together, start a book club together, get together just because your names are all Robert! The sky is the limit. Be in touch with Rabbi Lydia Medwin to explore your ideas at lmedwin@the-temple.org.

This year, we are excited to feature new Temple Connect Chai groups – if you live in a neighborhood, and most of us do, you could help gather other Temple members who want to stay local but still be involved. We will provide all the necessities for starting up: a workshop, a coach, a discussion guide (if you want one), and the people. In the words of our teacher Steve Gladen, all you need to do is H.O.S.T. – Have a heart for people; Open your place (home, office, coffeehouse, etc.); Serve a snack; Turn to Your Reason for Leading. If you’d like to lead a Chai group in your neighborhood, contact Rabbi Lydia Medwin at lmedwin@the-temple.org.

Our group leaders report that their lives have been inspired and transformed by their leadership of a small group – consider leading one for yourself and all those around you who need someone to help them connect!

Keep your eyes open for many, many more opportunities to join a small group when they begin to form in the fall of 2017!

SUPPORT THE TEMPLE WHEN YOU SHOP!

Kroger Community Rewards
Enroll your Kroger Plus card in the Kroger Community Rewards Program. Enrollment is easy and does not impact your savings. Visit www.kroger.com to sign in to your account and enroll using our NPO number: 75313

You must go through the online enrollment process. Have your Kroger Plus card handy. Once you have created an account, scroll down to the bottom of the page to the Community Rewards section. Put your information in and the search for the NPO number. The name you will see will be listed as “The Temple: THE HEBREW BENEVOLENT CONGREGATION”

Every time you shop for groceries and swipe your card, The Temple automatically starts earning a rebate. You must swipe your registered Kroger Plus card when shopping for each purchase to count.

To verify you are enrolled correctly, you will see The Temple’s name on the right side of your information page when applying the NPO number. Enrollment takes up to 7 days to start earning money towards The Temple community rewards.

AmazonSmile
Start shopping on AmazonSmile to make contributions to The Temple with every purchase. Visit smile.amazon.com/ch/58-0835812 and change the way you shop!

Breman Religious School Registration is Open!
New to TBRSS? No problem. We would love to speak with you about our school. TBRSS strives to promote positive Jewish identity is a fun and interactive learning environment. Contact Rabbi Rau, Elizabeth or Kara in the religious school office at 404-873-1734 to learn more about our exciting programming. We hope you will join us!

Returning Families: Please contact Marjorie Vaughn at 404-873-1734 or mvaughn@the-temple.org if you have not received a registration packet in the mail. All forms are due by August 5th to avoid late fees.

Can’t wait to see you on the first day of school on August 21!

INFORMATION ABOUT THE TEMPLE BREMAN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE:
Just go to www.the-temple.org/learn and click on TBRSS on the left hand side. You will find our calendar, curriculum, handbooks, and more!

Reform Movement Shabbat
Friday, July 28 at Davis Academy Lower School (8105 Roberts Dr, 30350) Pre-reception at 5:30 PM • Service at 6:30 PM

The Temple is excited to join with all of the Reform congregations and clergy for our annual Reform Movement Shabbat. This fun and festive service will be led by clergy from across the Atlanta community and kaddish lists from all of the congregations will be read. Please note there will be no services at The Temple that evening, but we will have Shabbat morning services the next day at 10:30 AM at The Temple as usual.

Tisha b’Av with Ahavath Achim Synagogue
Monday, July 31 • 8:30 PM • The Temple

For the third year, The Temple and AA Synagogue are partnering to observe Tisha b’Av, commemorating the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and other disasters that have befallen our people. We will combine music, Eicha (Lamentations), meditation and conversation, as we reflect on the themes of destruction and renewal. For more information or questions, please contact Rabbi Loren Filsen Lapidus at llapidus@the-temple.org.

Caring Congregation Presents: In the Last Stage of Life
Sunday, August 27 • 11:00 AM–2:00 PM • Adult Media Center Cost: $15, covers materials and lunch

Last year through Caring Congregation, we learned about Women’s Health and Caring for Loved One with Dementia. This year, we follow the lifecycle towards its end. There are so many questions during this part of life: palliative care and hospice, wills and legal documents, ethical matters and matters of the heart. We’ll address all of these questions and more with our panelists from the Breman Home and specifically Weinstein Hospice. Please join us and gain insight on how to care for your loved one approaching the last stages of life.

Please RSVP to Joya Schmidt at jschmidt@the-temple.org. If you have any questions, please contact Rabbi Lydia Medwin at lmedwin@the-temple.org.
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Creating a strong endowment is the most important thing we can be doing for the future of our beloved Temple.
– Rabbi Peter S. Berg

Thanks to you, this Endowment Campaign will help establish financial stability for future generations. Creating a strong endowment is the most important thing we can be doing for the future of our beloved Temple.

We appreciate all donations and suggest a minimum of $10.00 per acknowledgement. Donations can be earmarked to one of our various donations funds. For more information on the various funds and their purpose in funding The Temple’s legacy and operations, please contact Rita Zado at 404-873-1731. You can make donations in person, over the phone, or via our website at WWW.THE-TEMPLE.ORG
Visit the-temple.org/israel2017 to watch the Bnei Mitzvah Livestream straight from Israel.