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There is a phenomenon in Judaism I like to call, “Shabbat Magic.” For me, Shabbat Magic is the moment when the sun goes down on Friday evening, and we shift into a different part of our week, pausing to catch our breath and revel in the togetherness that is Shabbat. Whether I’m at synagogue, having Shabbat dinner with friends and family, or anywhere in the world, I feel a little bit of that magic every time I take time to pause, reflect and breathe in the Shabbat air – air that somehow, magically, feels a little bit fresher and sweeter.

So, how is it that Friday nights can feel so different from Thursday nights? How is it that the feeling of being in the sanctuary, which is always beautiful and full of light, can completely transform as soon as the sun goes down? The answer is very simple – it’s community. It’s togetherness.

This Shabbat marks a professional transition for me, after three wonderful years as the Education and Marketing Assistant for SHACHARIT. I am excited to be Temple Shalom’s new Congregational Membership and Relationship Manager and to be diving into the holy work that is creating and sustaining meaningful, relational Judaism.

On a foundational level, I view this role as sacred – I am so blessed to bear witness to the incredible Temple Shalom community and to experience the holy, magical moments that take place not just on Shabbat, but every day.

I see that magic when nursery school families surround and support the parent whose child is melting down in the lobby. It happens when our Caring Community brings soup and wishes a *refuah shelaymah*, or a get well soon, to a community member who is sick or injured. It’s felt every week when our clergy ask us to turn to someone we don’t know at Shabbat services and introduce ourselves.

My vision for engagement at Temple Shalom is one without boundaries – where we cultivate and nurture each other, in the moments where we are joyful and optimistic and in the moments where we are sorrowful or challenged. We do that by listening carefully, thinking creatively and looking for relational moments in everything we do.

My hope is that every time you step into Temple Shalom, whether or not it is Shabbat, you can take a deep breath and recharge, knowing that this is a place where you are cared for just as you are. Whether you have been a member for 30 years or 30 days, know that this is your home and that there is always an ear to listen or a hand to hold. We want to celebrate with you, mourn with you, sit with you and walk with you as you go through life – because without you, a synagogue is just a building.

I look forward to getting to know each of you more and hearing your Temple Shalom stories. Thank you for welcoming me into your community.

Caroline Dorn