

currents

December 2020
Kislev 5781



Jacob Abbisso
Religious School
Graduate

Welcome to Currents!

The year 2020, the year of COVID, has been an extraordinary one. But as with most challenges, it has also provided an opportunity for change and innovation. Such is the case with our Temple communications.

During the first few months of the Covid quarantine, we delivered Temple news in an electronic version of our monthly bulletin. Along with our weekly emails, our monthly bulletin allows us to communicate all program information, upcoming Temple activities, as well as acknowledge B'nei Mitzvah, donations and birthdays.

It turns out, delivering the bulletin in a digital format by email is not only efficient but also cost effective for the Temple.

But if the year 2020 has taught us anything, it has reinforced the importance of relationships in our daily lives and within our Temple family. We are a Jewish community made up of wonderfully interesting and diverse members, looking to connect. Thus was born the idea for *Currents*.

Three times per year, we will publish *Currents*, a hardcopy magazine, that will communicate more of the soul of Temple Emanu-El. As you have come to expect, there will be columns from our Rabbi, President and Temple Educator. Additionally, there will be features on Temple members, spotlights on Neighborhoods, fun information on upcoming holidays, pictures from our school, contributing articles, recipes and more.

Our hope is that Temple members will pick up *Currents* and will feel great about belonging to our congregation; and non-members will read *Currents* and ask – why don't I belong here?

If you have ideas for articles or would like to be part of helping to produce *Currents*, please email Claudia Kaufman at temple@emanu-el.org.

Contents

From the Rabbi's Study:
Rabbi David J. Meyer



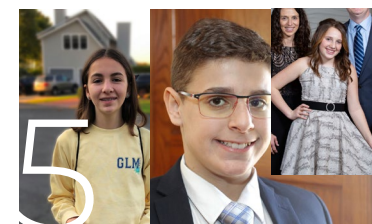
Hanukkah!

From Our Temple Educator:
Rabbi Allison Peiser



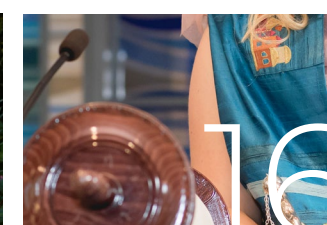
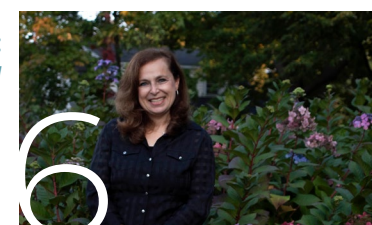
Hanukkah
Recipes

Winter
B'nei Mitzvah



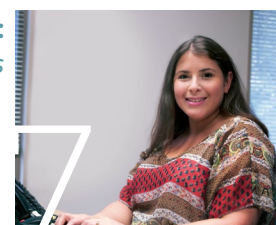
Why do Jewish
Americans Eat Chinese
Food on Christmas?

From Our President:
Lisa Nagel



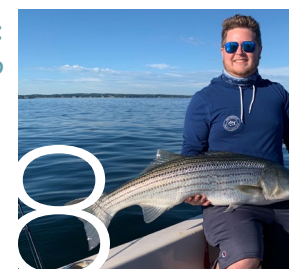
Recent B'nei Mitzvah:
A Different Experience

From Our Executive Director:
Jaime Meyers



Faces of
Temple Emanu-El

A Closer Look:
Jacob Abbisso



Ways to Remember

Tikkun Olam:
*Welcome the
Stranger*



Temple Telethon:
Mark Your calendars!

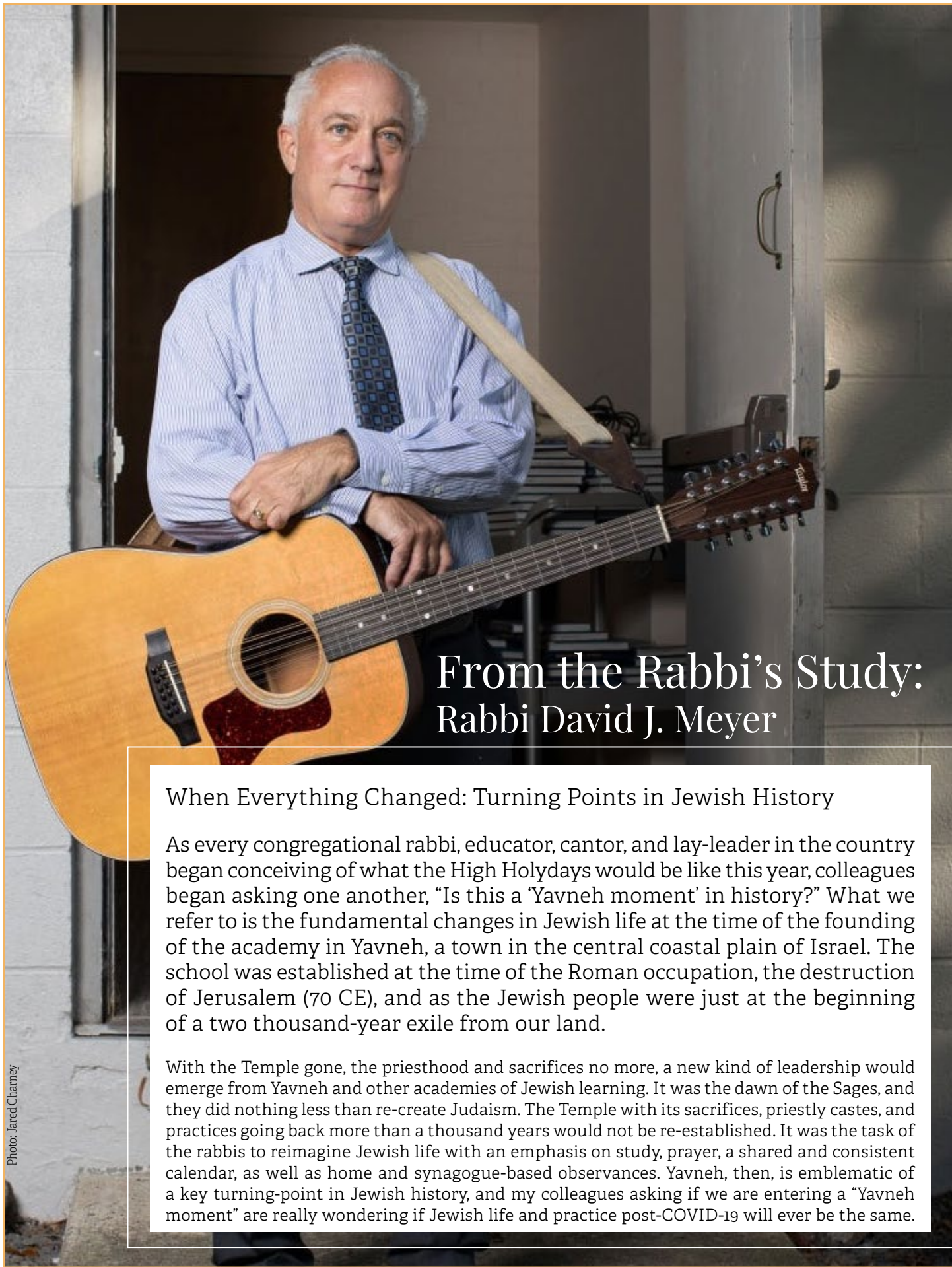


Photo: Jared Charney

From the Rabbi's Study: Rabbi David J. Meyer

When Everything Changed: Turning Points in Jewish History

As every congregational rabbi, educator, cantor, and lay-leader in the country began conceiving of what the High Holydays would be like this year, colleagues began asking one another, “Is this a ‘Yavneh moment’ in history?” What we refer to is the fundamental changes in Jewish life at the time of the founding of the academy in Yavneh, a town in the central coastal plain of Israel. The school was established at the time of the Roman occupation, the destruction of Jerusalem (70 CE), and as the Jewish people were just at the beginning of a two thousand-year exile from our land.

With the Temple gone, the priesthood and sacrifices no more, a new kind of leadership would emerge from Yavneh and other academies of Jewish learning. It was the dawn of the Sages, and they did nothing less than re-create Judaism. The Temple with its sacrifices, priestly castes, and practices going back more than a thousand years would not be re-established. It was the task of the rabbis to reimagine Jewish life with an emphasis on study, prayer, a shared and consistent calendar, as well as home and synagogue-based observances. Yavneh, then, is emblematic of a key turning-point in Jewish history, and my colleagues asking if we are entering a “Yavneh moment” are really wondering if Jewish life and practice post-COVID-19 will ever be the same.

This much we learned here at Temple Emanu-El in the aftermath of our live-streamed services and other novel approaches to the High Holyday season:

- Our “reach” is exponentially expanded via on-line services and programs, including distant families, students away at college, the elderly, and those unable to drive;
- Many Temple members and other “guests” found that the on-line experience offered a more intimate approach than the customarily huge attendance at Temple;
- Some reported being pleased by not having to be concerned with practical issues such as parking, dressing up a bit, finding seats, or even feeling that the Sanctuary/Social Hall environment was either too hot or too chilly (there is no in-between!);
- Because of the Facebook Live platform, some who might otherwise have been unable to participate, did so at a later time or date – still able to take part thanks to the recorded services.

“So is this,
indeed, a
“Yavneh
moment”
which will
re-shape
Jewish life
for decades
to come?”

Of course, as of December 2020 we are still in the early stages of the pandemic, even as Hanukkah approaches. As clergy and leadership, we are continuing to learn, to experiment, and to offer creative ways to keep the congregation and community engaged, connected with one another, cared for, and inspired. So is this, indeed, a “Yavneh moment” which will re-shape Jewish life for decades to come?

That is a question that is difficult, maybe impossible to answer quite yet. But our circumstances and the questions that emerge have inspired our upcoming Adult Continuing Education series in this year’s “Atlantic Avenue Limmud” hosted in collaboration between Temple Emanu-El and Congregation Shirat Hayam. As we have done for the past several years, Rabbi Michael Ragozin and I will co-teach a four-part course we have titled “When Everything Changed: Four Turning Points in Jewish History.” We have identified and selected these four watershed times as a way of perhaps understanding better what may lie ahead for us and Jewish life in the post-COVID era. What are those four “turning points” we will examine?

We will start with the Babylonian Exile, a period of some 50 years after Jerusalem was sacked and the Temple destroyed by the forces of King Nebuchadnezzar. For the first time, Jews were forced to experience Jewish life outside of the Land of Israel, absent a Temple in Jerusalem. Here, the seeds were planted for future exile as well, such as in the aftermath of the Second Temple, when Yavneh became emblematic of the direction Jewish life was to take during a much longer, forced exile and the creation of a truly international Jewish community. Yavneh, then, will be considered a second such turning point.

The third such turning point we have identified as the Enlightenment, known as the “Haskalah” in Hebrew. The general timeframe would be the mid-18th Century, as the walls of the medieval ghettos were coming down, and Jews, for the first time, were offered

the opportunity to participate fully in European life and culture. Secular education, biblical criticism, and the scientific study of Judaism were the hallmarks of an era that led to the rise of Reform Judaism, and other non-traditional expressions of our faith. We are the immediate inheritors of the Haskalah, which sought to enable the Jewish people to simultaneously participate in modern life alongside our non-Jewish citizens, while still remaining true to our heritage and traditions.

Finally, the creation of the modern State of Israel will be the fourth such turning point to consider. Not only did the founding of the State in 1948 mark the return to our homeland (or the possibility thereof) following two millennia of wandering and homelessness, but it also shifted the primary locus of Jewish life and creativity away from America, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and to the Israeli expression of Jewish identity in general.

Rabbi Ragozin and I are very excited to explore these turning points with you, and we hope that you will join us for these upcoming sessions. They are all free of charge, but you will need to register in advance. As we investigate millennia of Jewish history, and the lessons that emerge, we will keep in mind the question, asking if we are living in a “Yavneh moment” after all.

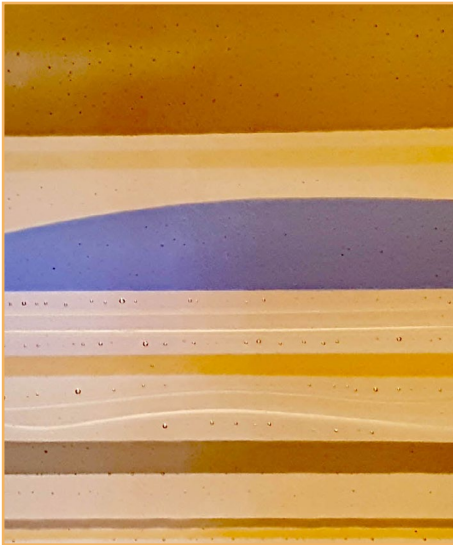




Photo: Kat Gunther

From Our Temple Educator: Rabbi Allison Peiser

“What exactly are you doing with the religious school this year?” is a frequent question. Building on our experiences in the Spring, professional development on best practices for online learning, and the pre-existing program at Temple Emanu-El gave us the following structure:

Sunday school classes rotate learning in person and on Zoom for one hour and thirty minutes a week including T’filah with Rabbi Meyer.

Pre-Kindergarten to second grade meet approximately every other week in person. Weeks that are online, students have “activity bags” for projects that they can do at home. Third through sixth grade come approximately six times over the course of the year.

This is an opportunity to be with peers and attend T’filah with Rabbi Meyer in the sanctuary.

Even if a grade is meeting in person, we have the flexibility for students who are not feeling well and/or who learn remotely to participate in the class. Each grade has the same Zoom link every week, so if students’ plans change at the last minute, we can “Zoom them” into the classroom. Classes that are online also “attend” T’filah - students stay in the “Zoom Room” with their classmates and a teacher/Madrikhim share the service on Facebook Live. That way students “come to services” as a class either at the beginning of or at the end of their hour and thirty-minute session. The third through sixth grade students took home “Mishkan T’filah for Youth” prayerbooks so that they can follow along with Rabbi Meyer from home.

Our specials - music and art - also take place online. For art, students take home bags with all the art

supplies they need, and Cara (and the art Madrikhim) join Zoom classes to facilitate crafting at home. Our music Madrikhim have the same format - coming to the Zoom class for fifteen minutes at the end of the class. While we miss hearing students singing and creating art in person, we are glad that we can do both activities from the comfort of home. We will have approximately five music classes and art projects over the course of the year. We are especially appreciative that Josh Cohen has helped our music Madrikhim craft lessons to teach over Zoom. The art Madrikhim are also responsible for one project this year. We hope parents will send us pictures so that we have a gallery of completed projects at the end of the year.

Our new format has expanded the role of our Madrikhim. They help plan activities to make online learning more interactive. They are responsible for assisting with Zoom technology including serving as co-hosts to the teacher to ensure that everyone’s needs are met. We hope that the Madrikhim are learning multiple ways to work with students and teachers in a classroom setting and that this will extend beyond their work at Temple Emanu-El. In addition to our classroom Madrikhim, music Madrikhim and art Madrikhim, our newsletter Madrikhim compile information about weekly lessons and put the information in a weekly email for parents.

Weekday classes have been meeting in person. Initially, our students in third to sixth grade met outside. Parents had the opportunity to choose one of four sessions on Wednesdays or Thursdays or an online option. Based on student availability, we set up “learning pods.” Teachers work with groups of three to five students. We also have two Madrikhim on Wednesdays and Thursdays who provide extra support for teachers. In the past the Hebrew program has been self-paced. While some students worked on packets with “friends,” there was no formal Hebrew class. With our “pods,” teachers can help the students work on their individual packets and teach the group collectively

when appropriate. Sometimes this includes playing games, acting out plays, and other activities that diversify learning. The small group model makes it possible for students to learn material in ways that are most conducive to their learning styles. While one student might focus on the packet, filling out answers, another student can discuss the content with his/her teacher and display knowledge through different modalities. We hope that this also enhances the student’s learning experience, and that Hebrew school is not as cumbersome.

“The small group model makes it possible for students to learn material in ways that are most conducive to their learning styles.”

It has been wonderful to see the joy on students’ faces after spending time learning in person. In general, it has been a positive experience for Hebrew to be formatted this way.

When learning goes online, parents have the option for students to work with the same teachers one-on-one for 20 minutes or work with a group for 30-45 minutes. This will allow students to continue to learn in the modality that best fits their learning style and schedule. We are glad that the one-on-one model worked successfully in the Spring, and that we are also able to include a group learning option this year.

The Pre-Confirmation, Confirmation and Post-Confirmation classes are meeting online. Pre-Confirmation started at the end of October. The

seventh graders are using the “Moving Traditions B’nei Mitzvah” curriculum to learn about becoming a Jewish adult: discussing how things change when a person becomes B’nei Mitzvah and a pre-teen. In addition to the sessions for the pre-teens/teens, we have family sessions so that parents and students can discuss the significance of the ceremony in their family. This is a springboard for deeper conversations about moving into new stages of life and how that shifts the dynamics between children and adults. The sixth grade will start this program in the Spring.

Our eighth-grade students are learning about the Holocaust through the book, “The Devil’s Arithmetic.” Their conversations include the significance of “remembering” through the experience of someone their age. The book also includes a family seder which allows students to discuss their personal and family seder customs.

When Pre-Confirmation resumes in January and March, we will have two more four-week sessions and students will help the teachers craft the curriculum based on their personal interests. This might include movies/TV shows, books, philosophical conversations and more.

Even though our school year does not look the same as previous years, we continue to expand the curriculum and the roles of our Madrikhim and faculty. Having the same faculty, teaching the same grades, has enabled us to adapt the curriculum to online learning and incorporate more projects. We hope this year will be memorable in positive ways when students, teachers, Madrikhim and parents look back on their experiences.



Winter B’nei Mitzvah



Jeremy Kaplan
December 19th at 10:30am
Son of Melanie and Jeff Kaplan



Lucy Cohen
December 19th at 5:30pm
Daughter of Valerie and Mark Cohen



Sydney Berman
February 6th at 5:30pm
Daughter of Julie and Ben Berman



From Our President:
Lisa Nagel

had a Jewish Community Center. When I told my Dad, he said “move there – that is where you belong.” He had spent most of his youth engaged in activities at a local JCC and had always wished that my sister and I had had the same opportunity.

Once we had our first child, my husband and I wanted to join a synagogue but we did not know how to begin our pursuit. You see, I was not raised in a traditional synagogue. I was raised in a Chavurah, a small group of like-minded Jewish families who shared Shabbat, holiday services, lifecycle events and Jewish learning. Our group, Chavurah Deevray Torah, started simply with a Reform Rabbi and a group of committed Jewish families. The group provided a unique Jewish upbringing that I wanted to replicate for my family.

Chavurah Deevray Torah was founded in 1972 by a group of 25 families, including mine. A young Rabbi, Mark Golub, was hired and a congregation was formed. The Chavurah did not have a building in which to pray. Throughout my upbringing, we had services in the basement of a bank and a church, Sukkot in a congregant’s backyard, Passover in a hotel ballroom, High Holyday services in a school auditorium and our Yom Kippur break fast in a congregant’s basement. It did not matter where we met, it was just important that we had a place to gather in prayer together.

My father built the ark that he carried and set up at every Friday night service to hold our precious sefer torah. Rabbi Golub designed the prayer book which my father carried to every service in milk crates. As kids, my sister and I were responsible for putting a prayer book on every chair before the congregants arrived. The Rabbi played the accordion and loved to sing, so Friday nights and holiday services were very joyous.

With the Rabbi’s vision and leadership, we had a school for the children of the congregation and study sessions for the adults. Sunday school was taught by parents in their homes. Hebrew school was taught by Rabbi Golub on Wednesday evenings in a local congregant’s basement, and he met with Bar and Bat Mitzvah students at his home for their individual service preparation. Adult study sessions were held on Sunday mornings in different members’ homes.

In addition to not having a building, Chavurah Deevray Torah never required dues. Members always contributed voluntarily what they could afford. Our congregation was one of the first to offer this type of ‘pledge model’ system of membership. From 1975 until today, my father has handled the administrative/financial matters for the group. He has also served as its only President and resident shofar blower for the past 45 years.

I am a transplant.

I was not born or raised here. My husband, Dave, is a transplant too. When we moved here in 1999, we had no idea how rare it was for a couple to settle down in Marblehead or on the North Shore of Massachusetts without having some familial connection. We found Marblehead by complete chance but quickly realized how fortunate we were to find such a special community.

As a young, unaffiliated Jewish couple moving to this area, we looked at houses in many different towns. During our search, we discovered that Marblehead

So, how was I going to find a similar experience for my family here on the North Shore? Where would I find a reform congregation that felt connected like family... with a Rabbi who sang and played music... that offered opportunities for learning and leadership for both children and adults... and most importantly, that we could afford to join? Attending a Temple Emanu-El Open House checked all of these boxes.

Temple Emanu-El was our place and, for the past 12 years, this is where we have belonged as a family. Temple Emanu-El was going to be our version of the Chavurah. We knew that our entire family would have the opportunity to study Torah and Judaism in a way that reinforced the goals, values and ideals of the Jewish people embodied in our tradition in a way that resonated personally with us. We joined that week knowing how blessed we were to have found Rabbi Meyer and Temple Emanu-El.

Temple life has served as an integral part of our family. It has helped guide us in our Jewish way of life. We now pray in a beautiful sanctuary, we have replaced an accordion with a couple of guitars and, as Temple President, my responsibilities have grown tremendously since my days of putting prayer books on members’ seats. We feel so fortunate to have made Temple Emanu-El our spiritual home.



From Our Executive Director:
Jaime Meyers

As the Executive Director of Temple Emanu-El for the past five and a half years, I have always worn many hats—it’s the nature of the job. However, in 2020, the year of COVID, my job description has become even more unique. I am now the fully-masked, hand-sanitized, Executive Director, working from six feet away.

Normally, my job entails managing the staff, helping members, working with vendors, managing Temple finances, maintaining our physical plant... but this past year, other unique tasks were created.

I would like to share with you a list of Executive Director firsts, - tasks that I could not have imagined being on my to-do list prior to this unprecedented time.

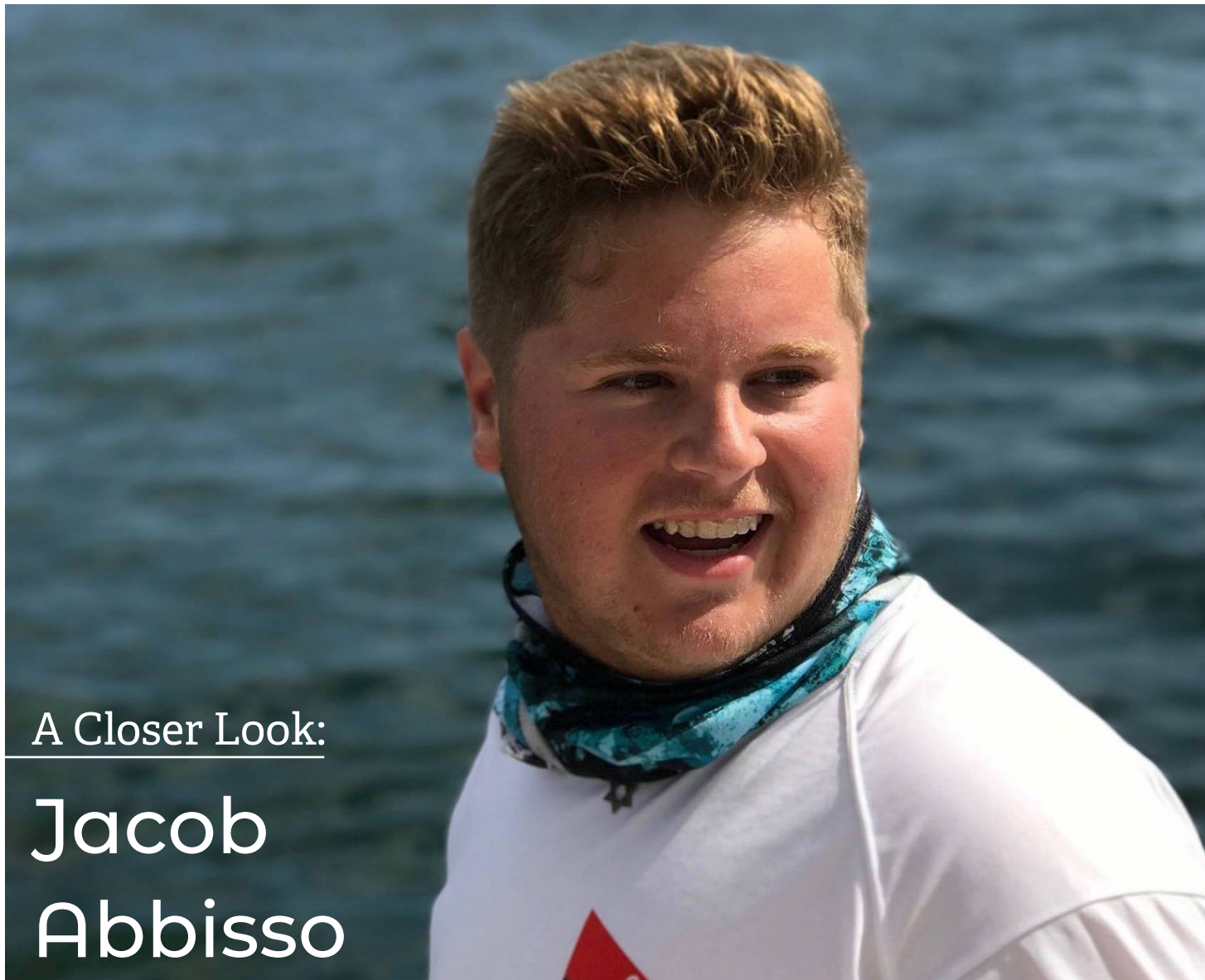
1. Ran drive-through operations for members to pick up Shabbat dinners, High Holyday goodie bags and prayer books. I’m now ready for the fast-food industry!
2. Spent the High Holyday services sequestered in the A/V control room to make sure our live stream of services ran smoothly.
3. Ordered more hand sanitizer than I could have ever imagined.
4. Discussed approximately 237 possible configurations for appropriately setting up the bima with social distancing and plexiglass partitions.
5. Led weekly staff meetings outside—it’s been lovely!

6. Assigned designated bathrooms for each staff member.
7. Arranged the logistics for the Temple’s first outdoor service.
8. Attended or led hundreds of Zoom meetings.
9. Have seen the Temple staff “step up” and show their commitment by never missing a beat and doing everything they could to not only keep operations moving, but to also be present for our congregants, while also supporting each other.
10. Witnessed creativity, generosity and kindness beyond all expectation. Members continue to help other Temple members, as well as the community at large in impactful ways. The real care for each other that I knew existed before, has been realized and multiplied.

When I look back at this time, I will always fondly remember these unique firsts - all envisioned and carried through for the safety of our staff and Temple members. Of course, I hope and expect for some of these tasks to never be needed again, but like many others during this time, I have, as well, found silver linings.

Temple Contacts		781-631-9300 393 Atlantic Avenue, Marblehead, MA 01945
Rabbi David J. Meyer djm@emanu-el.org ext: 111	Julie Grossman Administrative Assistant julie@emanu-el.org ext: 109	
Jaime Meyers Executive Director jmeyers@emanu-el.org ext: 110	Shelby Chapper Engagement and Program Coordinator shelby@emanu-el.org ext: 122	
Jon Nelson Music Director temple@emanu-el.org	Liza Genovese Bookkeeper liza@emanu-el.org ext: 121	
Rabbi Allison Peiser Temple Educator apeiser@emanu-el.org ext: 130	Kat Gunther Graphic Designer kat@emanu-el.org ext: 123	
Lisa Nagel President lanagel18@gmail.com		

[Click here for more info on the staff!](#)



A Closer Look:

Jacob Abbisso

Some little boys want to be firefighters when they grow up, others maybe an astronaut or police officer. But from a very early age, Jacob Abbisso only ever wanted to be one thing – he wanted to be a fisherman. And he has done exactly that. But there’s a lot more to this 20-year old Marblehead native than simply his fishing stories.

Jacob is the son of Jim Abbisso and Melinda Grosser, 19-year members of Temple Emanu-El. He describes his folks as “two of the best parents I could ever have asked for” which gives you some insight into the kind of kid Jacob is. He started out at the JCC pre-school, spent grades K-8 at Cohen Hillel Academy (now Epstein Hillel), finally graduating from Gann Academy. He is now a junior at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT.

Along with a wide smile and a hearty laugh, this high-spirited young man is truly an entrepreneur at heart. He first dipped his toe into the business world as an enterprising eight-year old.

Jacob's second grade teacher challenged his class with the “Giraffe Project” where students were asked to *stick their necks out into the community* to make a difference. A lover of animals who also loved putting smiles on peoples’ faces, Jacob took his task seriously and decided to tackle the project by teaching himself to make balloon animals.

Armed with a packet of CVS balloons, Jacob planted himself in front of Java Sun on the 4th of July, 2008 and began twisting balloons into animal shapes for passers-by. Any donations he collected were given to the Marblehead Animal Shelter. Soon, people began asking him if he had a business card, did he do children’s parties, or could he be part of a town event.

It wasn’t long before Jacob became the go-to-guy in the area for balloon animals and soon “The Balloon Kid” business was born. Demand grew, CVS balloons were replaced with professional quality materials and Jacob found himself more and more at town street festivals, holiday fairs and private parties. Over the years, Jacob has continued his balloon business, still donating proceeds to the Marblehead Animal Shelter. And his work has not gone unnoticed as he has been recognized for his work by his school, the Marblehead Rotary and the Animal Shelter. One change though, as soon as he grew a beard, he changed the name of his business from the “Balloon Kid” to the more mature “Balloon Dude”.

But without a doubt, the activity that brings the biggest smile to Jacob’s face is fishing.

Growing up fishing casually with his father on board their 21-foot Sea Ray, Jacob’s relationship with fishing changed monumentally when he was signed up for his first session of The Ultimate Kids’ Fishing Camp. He was 10 years old or so. He was hooked, pun intended.

The Ultimate Kids’ Fishing Camp is a unique, local, boat-based program for boys and girls ages 8-16 years old with an interest in the outdoors, the marine environment and fishing. Led by professional fishing guides, Jacob would spend one week, then two weeks and then three weeks each summer soaking up everything he could learn from the pro fishing guides. He attended until he was too old to attend anymore.

Jacob’s father, Jim, who also loved to recreationally fish, knew he and Jacob would be spending a lot more time on the water. In 2010 he upgraded the family boat to a 25-foot Grady White fishing boat equipped with all the necessary amenities to do some serious fishing.

At 12, Jacob got his Boating Safety Certificate which allows 12-15-year-

olds to operate motorboats without adult supervision. He continued fishing on his own, but now he was armed with the best techniques from each of the camp’s guides and added knowledge of how to seriously target game fish in our area. He had the tools and developed his own style of fishing.



In June of 2019, at only 19 years old, Jacob received his OUPV (Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel) Near Coastal Captain’s License from the US Coast Guard and Department of Homeland Security. His Captain’s license allows him to take paying passengers on board a vessel of up to 100 tons and out to 100 nautical miles offshore.

Jacob had always had a love of the water and fishing, and with his Captain’s license in hand, he set out to share his passion with others. In a matter of weeks, he opened his fishing charter business - Big Fish Mojo Sportfishing.

Not your average fishing charter business, Jacob takes a very scientific approach to finding and catching BIG fish. He passes on his knowledge and respect for the marine

environment, shows how to target game fish sustainably and practices safe handling. 2020 was his first full season, and he found himself on the water almost every day with consistently 2-3 charter trips daily.

“Whenever we’re out, we always try to be environmentally conscious. I don’t love keeping fish with numbers that are not great right now - I’m a big advocate of the Catch-Photo-Release program.”

And as *what goes around comes around*, Captain Jake now works closely with and is one the fishing guides at The Ultimate Kids’ Fishing Camp. Campers and future fishermen look up to Jacob as he shares his love, passion and knowledge of fisheries in our area. Over the years, Jacob has also found himself fishing alongside Rabbi Meyer several times. He gave our rabbi high marks and says he is a very good fisherman who has brought in a lot of great fish.

When asked about his favorite Temple Emanu-El memories from his younger days, Jacob quickly responded he always loved the Purim carnivals and also loved attending the Sunday morning services for parents and their kids. He recalled and valued his time in the Rabbi’s study during Confirmation and Post-Confirmation classes, especially the conversations on Jewish ethics and how to look at life through a Jewish lens. Jacob was also a Madrikh (a teacher’s helper) at the Temple Religious School for a number of years, serving as both a Hebrew and B’nei Mitzvah tutor.

Now in his junior year of college, Jacob was attracted to Wesleyan because it is fairly small in size and there is a lot of social action. But foremost he finds that students, faculty and staff are open and easy to approach - there is a strong sense of community. He lives in a school-owned apartment on campus, and his classes are both in person and remote during Covid.

In continuing his journey of becoming an educated member of



the Jewish community, Jacob is now a Religion major at Wesleyan with a minor in Jewish and Israel Studies. His studies focus on learning about people and their view of the world through their belief system.

He began college thinking pre-med might be a good track for him. But in looking back, he realized he was always super interested in Jewish thought, morals and ideology and has always felt a real connection to it.

“I’m a big advocate of the Catch-Photo-Release program.”

At college, he is co-president of the only pro-Israel organization on campus, Cardinals for Israel. He describes the student group as a place to learn more about the Israel-Palestine conflict through programming, speakers and cultural events.

Although not absolutely sure what his next steps will be after college, right now Jacob is considering attending Rabbinical School after graduation.

Lastly, when this balloon-twisting, big-fish angling, potential future rabbi was asked for some fun facts about himself, Jacob came back with three items. First, he did martial arts for a number of years and is a 3rd degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do. Second, he is multi-lingual, speaking English, Hebrew, Spanish and is currently learning Arabic.

And third, “I am also a very adventurous eater. I will eat literally anything - except bugs.”

As with most 20-year-olds, there are still many avenues to explore, studying to be done and stories to be told. But there’s a good chance that wherever Temple Emanu-El’s Jacob Abbisso does end up, it will have a view of the ocean.



Each issue of Currents will feature a Temple member with a unique story, skill, talent, or journey.

TIKKUN OLAM: תקון עולם

Welcome the Stranger

A refugee “is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”

- 1951 Refugee Convention

Very few people are granted permission to enter the United States as refugees. Every refugee applies from abroad and there can be many hurdles. Only when the danger is real and immediate will a family be given refugee status, which comes with working papers and a green card.

In August 2020, with the US economy shut down by the coronavirus pandemic, members of Welcome the Stranger, a partnership of Temple Emanu-El, Old North Church and St. Andrews, and an offshoot of the Temple’s Tikkun Olam Neighborhood, learned of a large family from Guatemala that was fortunately granted refugee status. Catholic Charities found them an unfurnished apartment ready for occupancy in Dorchester’s Fields Corner neighborhood.

With less than 4 days until the family would arrive, the Welcome the Stranger group activated the network of donors who had been active in earlier efforts to resettle an immigrant family. Deahn Leblang, founder of Temple Emanu-El’s Welcome the Stranger group, opened her garage to receive donations of furniture, lamps, linens, housewares and cleaning supplies from members of the three Welcome the Stranger houses of worship.

Organizing a crew, the group dipped into donated funds to rent a U-Haul truck to gather donated items, including a sofa, chairs, tables and household goods, for delivery to Fields Corner. New beds were also purchased for family members, who range in age from a year-old baby to an 87-year old grandfather.

Volunteers then wanted to ensure that this new home was as welcoming and ready as possible for the family. They made the beds, set-up the kitchen and hung pictures. They finished by putting a stroller in the hall closet.

This began a new mission for the Welcome the Stranger group, that originally formed to resettle an asylum-seeking family. The Welcome the Stranger initiative began receiving many requests for help to resettle families, and

the group was happy to help, with the support of the three congregations.

Volunteers have, and continue to, organize furniture pickups, set up kitchens, and sort through linens so that the families that arrive can have a clean, well-supplied home with a door they can safely lock behind them.

“Catholic Charities tells us that our group is among the quickest to respond,” Deahn says. The social services agency has called on the Welcome the Stranger network many times since August to help furnish and equip homes for new Americans. Often, the turnaround time is very quick and the group needs to move quickly. “When a family is informed they will be granted refugee status, they may have no more than 10 days’ notice,” says Deahn.

“The generosity of our members overwhelms us every time we reach out,” said Marcy Bernstein, chair of the Temple’s Tikkun Olam Neighborhood.

Temple Emanu-El’s Welcome the Stranger initiative began

in 2015 with the arrival of an asylum seeker, a young woman from Haiti and her 18-month old daughter. The family was recently granted permanent residence in the U.S., and is now living in Marblehead, where the mother works as a CNA and the daughter attends second grade. Together, with our partners St. Andrews Church and Old North Church, the initiative has readied 11 homes for refugees in the Boston area. The Tikkun Olam Neighborhood is still collecting housewares and financial donations, and is looking for storage to keep furniture as well! Contact the Temple office to offer help.



[Click here to learn more about our Neighborhoods!](#)

HAPPY HANUKKAH!



WHY we Light the Menorah

Some 2100 years ago the Land of Israel came under the rule of the Syrian-Greek emperor, Antiochus IV, who outlawed the study of Torah, the observance of its commandments and defiled the Holy Temple in Jerusalem with Greek idols.

A small, vastly outnumbered band of Jews led by Judah the Maccabee waged battle against the mighty Greek armies and drove them out of the land. When they reclaimed the Holy Temple on the 25th of Kislev, they re-dedicated it (Hanukkah means “Dedication”) with the celebration of the Sukkot Festival, which they had missed out on during the war. They re-lit the golden Menorah, and in keeping with ancient, Biblical practice,

they observed the 8-day festival with thanksgiving and celebration, complete with lulav and etrog.

Later Rabbinic tradition described how a single cruse of oil was discovered containing the seal of the High Priest. Miraculously, the one-day supply of oil lasted eight days and nights. To commemorate and publicize the victory of the Maccabees, we light the Hanukkah menorah (also known as a hanukkiah) on each of the eight nights of Hanukkah.

This year we start lighting the menorah on Thursday night, December 10, 2020.

HOW to Light the Menorah

1. Arrange the candles on the menorah. On the first night, set one candle to the far right of the menorah. On the following night, add a second light to the left of the first one, and then add one light each night of Hanukkah - moving from right to left.
2. Gather everyone around the menorah.
3. Light the shamash candle. Then hold it in your right hand (unless you are left-handed).
4. While standing, recite the blessings.
5. Light the candles. Each night, light the newest (left-most) candle first and continue lighting from left to right. (We add lights to the menorah from right to left, while we light from left to right.)

CELEBRATE WITH TEMPLE EMANU-EL!

Light!

Join us for our annual Community Candle Lighting — this year on Zoom. Join in this special opportunity to light the Hanukkah candles as a Temple family.

Sunday, December 13th at 5:30pm

Sing!

Following our Community Candle Lighting, don't jump off that Zoom call!

Our Music Director, Jon Nelson, will be leading us in joyful Hanukkah music!

Please join us!

Give!

This is our fourth year partnering with the DCFS in Salem to provide holiday gifts to children in the foster care system. Sponsored by our Families with Children Neighborhood, this year's 'virtual' Giving Menorah will again be available for Temple members to sign up and donate gifts to local children in need.

All purchases can be made online through major retailers (Walmart, Target, Amazon, etc.) with links to all items on the Temple's homepage of www.emanu-el.org.

WHAT to say: The Blessings

The lights of Hanukkah are a symbol of our joy. In time of darkness, our ancestors had the courage to struggle for freedom: freedom to be themselves, freedom to worship in their own way. Theirs was a victory of the weak over the strong, the few over the many, and the righteous over the arrogant. It was a victory for all ages and all peoples.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה.

Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai E-lo-hey-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, a-sheer kid'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav v'tzi-va-nu le-had-lik neur shel Ha-nuk-kah. (Blessed is the Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, by whose mitzvot we are hallowed, who commands us to kindle the Hanukkah lights.)

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai E-lo-hey-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, she-a-sa ni-sim la-a-vo-tein-u ba-ya-mim ha-heim bazman ha-zeh. (Blessed is the Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors in days of old, at this season.)

Recite on the first night only:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחנינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai E-lo-hey-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, she-he-che-ya-nu ve-ki-ye-ma-nu ve-hig-i-a-nu la-zeman ha-zeh. (Blessed is the Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.)

Potato Latkes

2 cups grated raw potatoes (*measure after draining*)
2 eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon salt
1 rounded or heaping tablespoon flour or matzo meal
pinch of baking powder
1 small onion, grated (optional)

Combine all ingredients. Mix well. Drop pancake mixture by the tablespoonful onto a hot skillet generously greased with butter or shortening. Fry on both sides until brown. Serve piping hot with sour cream or with applesauce. *Could serve four, but they go like hotcakes!!*



Hanukkah Sugar Cookies

1/2 cup shortening
1/4 cup margarine
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
2 eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 3/4 cups flour
3/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
additional flour for rolling

Cream shortening, margarine and sugars together until light and fluffy. Add eggs and vanilla extract, mixing thoroughly. Sift together flour, salt, baking powder and cinnamon. Add to shortening mixture and mix until smooth, forming a soft dough. Chill for at least an hour until firm enough to roll out.

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. On lightly floured surface, roll dough to one fourth inch thickness. Cut with Hanukkah cookie cutters into desired shapes. (Dip cookie cutters in flour to prevent sticking). Place on ungreased baking sheet and bake for 6 to 8 minutes or until brown around the edges. When cool, decorate with colored frosting, colored sugar or sprinkles. *Makes 4 dozen.*



A G P V O A T N I H S I L L Q
S Y H E S N I O C J D Y V E B
W W J K S T X V J R F G K O E
Q E A O E L P M E T J W P D A
C J K K L G V I M O B S X Y C
K Z F G R S D W N A V J T M I
R L V K B E K Z G P F H Q P I
G A F M L A T K E E G M G X X
J E P E E B A C C A M I E X O
G Z A C K Z X X H I D R F P N
N D F L W N H A R O N E M D D
E X G S N I R A U F H D M C R
N I V D Q Z C T P R A C T N W
U A G I L L Y X O K K G Y G K
N X I H E I Y R Z J K Z C V S
D L M Z T G O A L L U A O G Y
Z U M Y C H G K Z C N M F Y B
Y C E K P T Y D G D A I G A L
R B L Z I N K O L U H V B H W
F O G V E Q H E E N J G L X P

Why do Jewish Americans Eat Chinese Food on Christmas?

Rudolph. Tinsel. Nativity scenes. Chinese food. One of these things is not like the others, *can you guess which one?*



In not celebrating Christmas, Jewish Americans in the early 20th century, particularly in New York City ended up creating their own unique tradition that has become widespread across the country: an overindulgent family meal at a Chinese restaurant, many times followed by a group trip to a movie theater. But exactly how DID General Tso's chicken make its way onto many Jewish family tables at Christmas time?

The roots of eating Chinese food on Christmas date back to the end of the 19th century on the Lower East Side of New York City where Jews and the Chinese lived in close proximity to each other. There were around a million Eastern European Jews living in New York around 1910 (roughly a quarter of the city's population). The majority of Chinese immigrants came to the Lower East Side from California after the 1880s, many going into the restaurant business. But it wasn't just that Chinese restaurants were open on Sundays and holidays when many restaurants would be closed, the two groups were also linked by their *otherness*.

Often in lower Manhattan, immigrant Jews would open delis to serve other Jews, Italians ran restaurants primarily for other Italians and Germans had places that would serve only Germans. But Chinese restaurant owners accepted Jews and other immigrant and ethnic groups as customers without precondition. Their lack of anti-Semitism gave Jews a sense of security, and American Jews were drawn to the exoticism of Chinese restaurants. With unusual wallpaper, eccentric decorations, chopsticks, and exotic food names, Chinese restaurants were the most foreign, the most "un-Jewish".

The first mention of the Jewish population eating Chinese food was in 1899 in the *American Hebrew Weekly* journal. They criticized Jews for eating at non-kosher restaurants,

particularly Chinese food places. Jews continued to eat at these establishments, and 30 years later it was reported there were eighteen Chinese restaurants within walking distance from Ratner's, a famous Manhattan kosher dairy restaurant.

Chinese cuisine is well suited to Jewish tastes because traditional Chinese cooking doesn't use milk in the majority of their recipes. And while most first-generation Jews living in America strictly practiced kashrut, many second-generation Jews remained strict in their home observance but became more flexible as they ate outside the home.

Chinese food allowed some Jews to ease away from strict kosher practice. They rationalized that because pork, shrimp and lobster were chopped or minced or hidden in an eggroll or a wonton (that closely resembled a Jewish kreplach) or smothered in rice, it was okay. If the ingredients were invisible or disguised from their more natural appearance, they were thought of as *safe treyf*.

Rabbi Joshua Plaut, PhD author of "A Kosher Christmas: 'Tis The Season To Be Jewish" explains, "The Chinese restaurant was a safe haven for American Jews who felt like outsiders on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. If you go to a Chinese restaurant, you become an insider. You can celebrate somebody else's birthday and yet be amongst friends and family and members of the tribe, thereby the outsider on Christmas becomes the insider." He goes on to add, "I think we are like the 'Fiddler on the Roof' yelling tradition. Americans eating Chinese food on Christmas has become an American tradition - it's one of our minor contributions as Jews in America to the American way of life."

So, while slurping wonton soup on Christmas may be a time-honored tradition, it is now also practically law since it was a critical part of the 2010 confirmation hearing for Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan.

Senator Lindsey Graham asked Kagan where she had spent the previous Christmas. With great laughter, she replied: “You know, like all Jews, I was probably at a Chinese restaurant.”

Senator Chuck Schumer then jumped in adding, “If I might... no other restaurants are open.”

Sources:

Wikipedia contributors, “Jewish American Chinese restaurant patronage,” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=JewishAmericanChineserestaurantpatronage&oldid=976839534>

Ellsworth, Kellar (2019, December). When did Jewish Americans Start Eating Chinese Food for Christmas? Groovy History. <https://groovyhistory.com/jewish-americans-chinese-food-christmas>

Chandler, Adam (2014, December). Why American Jews Eat Chinese Food on Christmas. The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2014/12/why-american-jews-eat-chinese-food-on-christmas/384011/?title=JewishAmericanChineserestaurantpatronage&oldid=976839534>
<https://groovyhistory.com/jewish-americans-chinese-food-christmas>
<https://www.theatlantic.com/nationalarchive/2014/12why-american-jews-ea-chinese-foodon-christmas/384011/>

Recent B’nei Mitzvah: A Different Experience

The pandemic has prevented traditional B’nei Mitzvah ceremonies from happening. As a result, smaller, more intimate family celebrations have taken place. Below are some recent Temple B’nei Mitzvah families and their thoughts on their different (positive) experiences!



Photo: Igor Klimov

Sam Brodsky

Son of Rory and David Brodsky
August 15, 2020

“It was a very meaningful experience even though it was small and it really felt special.”



Reese Friedman

Daughter of Robin and Matt Friedman
August 17, 2020

“While the Bat Mitzvah was quite different than what we originally envisioned, it was just as special and meaningful, if not more, to us and our family. The most important people in Reese’s life were present and that was all that mattered.”



Photo: Jared Channey

Madeline Goldman

Daughter of Jim and Julie Goldman
August 22, 2020

“We are so very proud of the job Maddie did. We had no idea that she would be so composed as we were not able to participate in any rehearsals at the Temple beforehand. One of the blessings that we had was getting to have family and friends be able to connect remotely, which we otherwise would not have had the opportunity to do prepandemic. The intimate gathering limited to her closest friends and family, was much more relaxed which led to a very enjoyable celebration.”

Arielle Kahn

Daughter of Risa and Larry Kahn
September 5th, 2020

“We are so very thankful that we were able to celebrate Arielle’s Bat Mitzvah ceremony in the sanctuary at Temple Emanu-El. Our intimate family group of 5 attended in person, with all other family and friends with us via Facebook Live. It was a Comfortable, Safe and Very Special Celebration and now a Treasured Memory during an uncertain time.”



Photo: Judith Carey Sargent



Photo: Perri Vanderclack

Penelope Levine-Stein

Daughter of Robin Stein and Rebecca Levine
September 12, 2020

“Penny’s Bat Mitzvah was certainly different than what we had imagined but the fact that we were still able to have the service at the Temple with our close family and friends allowed us to really just focus on Penny. In spite of all of the social distancing protocols, Rabbi Meyer and Jon Nelson provided a truly special and memorable experience for us all.

Chloe Overbaugh

Daughter of Kim and Tad Overbaugh
October 17, 2020

“Chloe’s ‘Covid Style’ Bat Mitzvah service at Temple Emanuel was a wonderful rite of passage. Although we all had to adjust to the idea that we were not able to celebrate the way we had originally planned, the small service with only a few family members was very special and meaningful. And we were grateful to be able to share the moment with extended family and friends through the Facebook Live stream. It was a fantastic day!”



Photo: Igor Klimov

The Temple Emanu-El Family



"Shofar Master," Don Ganz at Tashlich



Volunteer Crew Putting Together High Holyday Goodie Bags



Tashlich at Preston Beach



Fifth Graders About to Hang Sukkah Decorations



Painting Desks for Mass Coalition for the Homeless



Outdoor Shabbat Service



Senior Connection Weekly Tuesday Chat

All Masked Up!



Music Class Madrakhim



Our High Holyday Leadership Squad



The Great Brownie Giveaway



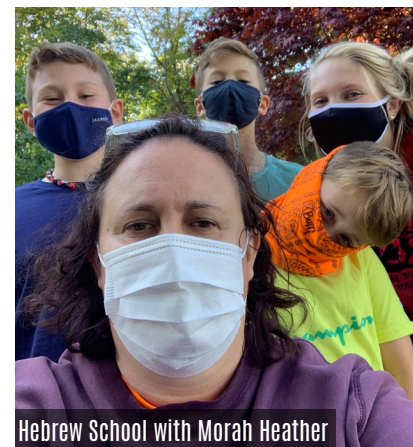
Outdoors and Active Walk Along Lynn Shore Drive



Outdoor Service



Family Outdoor Service



Hebrew School with Morah Heather

At Temple Emanu-El, there are many ways to
Honor, Celebrate, and Remember
dear friends, family, and past loved ones

Memorial/Yahrzeit Wall



It is a widely observed Jewish tradition to commemorate the passing of a loved one by remembering them on a dedicated Memorial Wall. The Temple Emanu-El Memorial Wall contains a plaque with the name and date of passing. Additionally, and in keeping with the ancient Jewish custom of honoring departed ones with a stone on a marker, each plaque also has a carrier where you can place a tumbled stone on anniversary dates, or anytime at all! Your loved one's name is read at time of yahrzeit in perpetuity. *Memorial plaques: \$750*

Tree of Life



Located in our lobby, the Temple's welcoming Tree of Life gives all who wish an opportunity to celebrate life's joyful blessings in perpetuity by inscribing them on one of its beautiful leaves or rocks. Celebrate your simcha - weddings, births, B'nei Mitzvah, anniversaries, graduations, milestones. Honor someone you love - children, parents, family, friends, teacher. *Tree of Life leaves and rocks: \$500 - \$10,000*

Bookplates



Temple Emanu-El also offers several opportunities to remember your loved ones with the dedication of a book to the Temple library or prayer book used at our weekly Shabbat service, a High Holyday machzor or Torah commentary. All books contain a tribute bookplate honoring and celebrating your loved one's name. *Bookplates \$36 - \$100*

If you would like to discuss a way that's right for you to Honor, Celebrate or Remember a family member or friend, contact our Executive Director, Jaime Meyers at 781.631.9300 or email at: jmeyers@emanu-el.org. Thank you!

Temple Emanu-El telethon

Join your Temple Emanu-El family for a fun-filled evening of music, entertainment, and online community.

During these challenging times, we would love to gather in person. But until then, we are going old-school with an online Telethon!

Sunday, January 31st

There will be all kinds of talent to keep you entertained: local talent, Temple talent, national talent — *there could even be a few surprises!*

Mark your calendar and plan to join us!
Keep an eye on our website, bulletin, and emails for Telethon news.

[Click here to learn more!](#)





David J. Meyer, Rabbi
Jaime Meyers, Executive Director
Allison Peiser, Temple Educator
Lisa Nagel, President

TEMPLE EMANU-EL CURRENTS
USPS 537-840 is published
by Temple Emanu-El, 393 Atlantic Ave.,
Marblehead, MA 01945
periodical postage paid at
Marblehead, MA 01945
Postmaster: Send address changes to
Temple Emanu-El Currents,
393 Atlantic Ave.,
Marblehead, MA 01945
781-631-9300

www.emanu-el.org

**PERIODICAL
POSTAGE
PAID
AT MARBLEHEAD
USPS 537-840**

Connect, Create, Belong – Give.

We look towards the new calendar year with hope for an end to the uncertain times brought by COVID-19. As a Temple community, we are committed to both supporting each other, as well as providing opportunities for continued connection.

With an eye laser-focused on Temple expenses, we strive each day to maintain a high-level of excellence in our programming and services. But our bills must be paid, and our building must be maintained. We ask that this year, as you make your year-end contributions, please consider Temple Emanu-El in your philanthropic giving.

There are many ways to give, including mailing or bringing in a contribution to the Temple, donating online at www.emanu-el.org, making a stock transfer or by simply calling 781-631-9300 with a credit card.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support.
It is much appreciated.

[Click here for end-of-year giving](#)