

The First Hebrew Congregation



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Thanks to Hy and Shelley Warshawsky for sponsoring the Chanukah celebration and to whose presence we look forward at many more such parties. The event was one for the books! We had 36 people who enjoyed cheese and potato latkes, salmon patties, and a full table of sweets and goodies! Friday night service was led by Lou Price and enjoyed by all. It certainly proves we can have successful activities in the winter months -- people will come for good food and quality programs. Thanks to our kitchen

committee for their help: Shelley Sommerfeld, Karen Riffer-Reinert, and Renee Kaplan, and to Steve Tolen who helped in the food preparation. Ricky Rothner provided Chanukah prizes and gifts.

As an after note, I did witness one of the great winning streaks at dreidel. Ana Fidelman won most of the chocolate gelt. We had to beg for its return after the dinner. Thank you Ana for letting us enjoy your winnings!

Save the Date

Our next celebration will be Purim on March 12. Anyone wishing to assist in the preparation of Hamantaschen and party set up, please contact Barry at 616-820-5623. We sure have fun with committee members and taste testing, so join us in preparing for the event. If anyone is interested in sponsoring this event, please call Barry, Steve or Remey. If you sponsor the event, we will even let you pick the menu for the party. If you want to see something special come out of our Glatt Kosher kitchen, please sponsor and give us a challenge!

We will conduct a second Seder on April 11. Please write down the date for this special event.

Restoration

The final phase of the FHC restoration has begun: our mechitzah is being restored, electrical upgrades are completed and the floors will be refinished. Walls on the north and

west end were plastered and the entire space was painted. The finishing touch will be new carpet. There will now be a bookcase for Sidurim!

Additionally, we have installed a motion sensor for the light on the back parking area and steps. Many of our members use the rear entrance, so this will enhance the safety and security of our Shul.

Thank You

A huge thank you to Steve Tolen who re-wired the large memorial board. All the lights now work and will last for years to come. This was no small task, so when you see Steve, give him a special thanks! Also, we must thank Steve Ehrlich for helping put the board back on the wall.

Steve Tolen with the help of Deb Zuckerman restored a number of old posters and made a display on the east wall of the Ben and Harriett Teitel Hall. It really looks great!

Be Well

We wish Cliff and Joyce Berman's son, Robert, a speedy recovery after being struck by a car while crossing the street.

Condolences

Condolences to Robinn Steiner-Williams and Claude Williams on the passing of Robinn's son, David Steiner.

Vorts - Rabbi Alan Cohen

Understanding prayer is the first step to an enhanced and meaningful experience at services. In the next newsletters, I will be explaining some of the prayers we recite. The two central prayers for us are the Shema and the Amidah. I begin with the Shema. The following is based upon the interpretive work of Rabbi Reuven Hammer, found in his commentary to the Siddur (Prayer Book) Or Hadash for the Weekdays which I have enclosed in quotes and added my own interpretive ideas which attempt to make even more contemporary some of the language and ideas of the original blessings and prayers:

SHEMA—"When reciting the verse 'Sh'ma Israel' we cover our eyes with our right or dominant hand in order to attain proper concentration when 'accepting the sovereignty of God'. We prolong the recitation of the word "ehad", "alone" or "one", while contemplating that God's rule extends throughout the entire universe."

As I recite the Sh'ma, may my heart and soul be directed toward the love of God and the acceptance of God's absolute sovereignty over my life. May I recognize God not only as the life-force of the unending and unbounded universe, but also as the divine spark within myself that impels me toward righteousness, mercy, and love of my fellow human being. May my mind be open to discover the path in which God will lead me, to discern right from wrong, to resist the temptations that are constantly present, and to place God's absolute demands of justice, mercy, and honesty above all else. May all my thoughts and actions be devoted to the service of God."

We want to thank the families that have made generous donations since the New Year.
Without you we would not survive:

Robert and Ann Abel	Sylvia Kaplan	Paul Rosenberg
Miles and Helene Beermann	Charlene Klein	Remy and Julia Rubin
Arlene Bookbinder	Harold and Bea Kraus	Sanford and Susan Schulman
Philip Bronstein	Rabbi Robert Marx	Carl and Lois Schwartz
Rabbi Alan and Linda Cohen	Donald and Sandra McGuire	Judith Sklar
Jerry and Barbara Cook	Jon Milan	Joseph and Chavie Steinfeld
Steve and Debbie Ehrlich	Lou Price	Irving Stenn
Kent and Deborah Fisher	Michael and Richonda Radon	Claude Williams and Robinn Steiner-Williams
Jerry and Charlene Fleischman	Barbara Render	Joseph and Midge Stulberg
Robert and Louise Gerber	Tony and Karen Riffer-Reinert	Arlene Tolen
Marcus and Andrea Gottlieb	David Ronin	Hy and Shelley Warshawsky
Barbara Haislip	Daniel Rosen	Freya Weberman
Robert and Sandra Handelsman	Dan and Jordana Rosen	Joshua Weiner
Jerrold and Trudy Hobfoll	Charles Rosenbaum and Mona Meadows	
David and Renee Kaplan		

In-kind donations were made by Ricky Rothner, Karen Tolen, and Debbie Zuckerman.

Thank you

We would like to acknowledge those who have volunteered for specific functions or those who are just a phone call away when help is needed. Whether it is a need for muscle to help move tables or setup crews that add the final touch of flowers to the table at an event, the volunteers help make us a success and are most appreciated. Thank you:

Robert Abel
David Ashen
Joyce Berman
Steve Ehrlich
Barry Fidelman
Patti Gaylord
Meryl Greene
Larry Hoffman
David & Renee Kaplan

Tony & Pat Martorano
Lou Price
Stuart Price
Karen Rifer-Reinert
Remey & Julie Rubin
Shelley Sommerfeld
Karen Tolen
Nancy Vilims