

Temple Shabbat Shalom

Volume 3, Issue 3

Chanukah 2003

The “Global Village” Congregation

Being Different – Not Indifferent

The Chanukah lights burn with one distinct and illuminating teaching. Being different –a minority within a majority culture, is a blessing. The Greeks over two thousand years ago decided they would not tolerate the Jews because they were different. Jews have a different way of marking time with holidays and the Sabbath. These were outlawed. Our Maccabean heroes arose to fight for religious freedom. We survived Greek oppression. Today we are free to be indifferent to our heritage. We often ignore the holidays and the Sabbath. The numbers of people exercising the freedoms the Maccabbes fought for is diminishing.

Demographically our numbers are down. A massive six million dollar National Jewish Population Survey (N.J.P.S.) declares “intermarriage is still rising”. The increase is from one in three to one in two. This will inspire many sermons. I may be the only Rabbi who sees a blessing in the increase. My experience at Temple Shabbat Shalom is that intermarried couples are more than willing to turn their homes into a Temple – often at the insistence of the non-Jewish partner.

Demographic studies focus on affiliation. Affiliation with a synagogue is often driven by parent’s desire for children to get an education. Skills are learned for Bar or Bat Mitzvah and the children “graduate” or are confirmed. Demographics indicate how many children go through this process. Numbers quantify. They do not comment on the extent to which this education fulfills the spiritual needs of individuals or families, or the quality of the experience.

The Mission of Temple Shabbat Shalom is to teach individuals and families how to practice religion in their personal lives and their homes. Through family education Bar and Bat Mitzvah is a process where families define how they will set aside time each week to be together, and observe the holidays.

Continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Saturdays 1-2:30pm

- 1 The “Global Village”**
- 2 “Global Village”- continued**
- 2 Mazel Tov’s**
- 3 In the Light of Chanukah**
- 3 Feed the Body while you feed the soul**
- 3 Shabbat Candle lighting times**

WINTER SHABBAT SERVICES

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|--|--------------------------------|
| December 6th | January 10th |
| February 7th | March 6th |
| <u>December 26th</u> | 7pm Friday night |
| Shabbat Service & Pot Luck | |
| Chanukah Celebration | |

Chanukah is a major holiday at Temple Shabbat Shalom. As a home observance the lighting of candles is a time for interfaith and other couples to create unique hybrid and blended family customs. The December dilemma challenges us to define that which is essential in religion. *Shabbat*-the Sabbath- is the Jewish contribution to civilization- a day set apart to imagine a better world. The Sabbath is so important it is included in the Ten Commandants. Peace in the home is the paradigm for Peace on Earth. Shabbat leads to Shalom.

I am an American Jewish Rabbi, in that order. My Judaism is defined by who I am as an American. I am assimilated. To assimilate according to Webster's dictionary is to "thoroughly comprehend". I understand that being a member of a nation that respects the right of minorities to practice their religions is in stark contrast to the Jews of two thousand years ago. Then being assimilated meant losing ones identity as a Jew and becoming Greek. This is not the case today. The vast majority of us believe in one nation under God and in the pursuit of liberty and justice by ethical laws. We are ethical monotheists. This is why I sanctify the marriage of a Jew and a Catholic or a Protestant as readily as a marriage between a democrat and a republican.

Our challenge is not to lose our identity in the melting pot. Freedom includes the right to ignore or hide from our cultural and religious heritage. Chanukah teaches us that true freedom allows us to be Americans and Jews or Christians. Interfaith couples are free to blend beliefs-to be American-Jewish-Christian-families. This is the light of Chanukah that illuminates the hearts and homes of the families of Temple Shabbat Shalom. My Prayer is that our congregation which is so unique and different never be indifferent.

Happy Chanukah,
Rabbi Aryeh Alpern

Simcha's- Mazel Tov to all

Fall Newlyweds:

Melissa & Dan- Fairport
Erica & Kirk- Maine
Heather & Scott-CT
Raina & George-Florida

Kenny & Jenny- Brant Lake
Jake & Frances-Salt Lake City
Matt & Leslie-Geneva, NY
Adam & Megan-Saratoga

Neil & Carrie-Sagamore
Andrew & Carrie-Albany
Howard & Michele-NYC
Michelle & John- Minneapolis

Mazel Tov on the newest bundle of Joy

Jody and Dallas on the birth September 8th of their daughter Elly Robin Sherman

Happy Anniversary

Stu & Connie-Nov 16-Ottawa

Taryn & Mike-Nov 17 Clifton Park

Marty & Maura Nov 29-MA

Doug & Karen-Dec 22-Clifton Park

Ken & Cindy-Dec 25-Albany

Dallas & Jody Dec 31-MA

Newest Congregants

Beth & Brice

Alysia, Jessica & Florence

Mark & Pon

Jason & Tanya

Sandy & Jonathan

Mark & Amanda

Felicia & Joel

Reg & Gail

Jill & Daniel

A Very Special Thank you to:

Doug and Karen Gladstone for all of their help as board members of Temple Shabbat Shalom it is from the hard work and support of congregants like Doug and Karen that we are able to continue to grow!

Cantor Bob Cohen and his lovely wife Patricia our newest additions to Temple Shabbat Shalom. Cantor Cohen's creative spirit and music were a wonderful addition to our Shabbat Service on November 8th.

In the Light of Chanukah
(For discussion)

Far from siphoning off the Jewish gene pool, perhaps intermarriage needs to be seen instead as creating new forms of identity, including multiple identities that will reshape what it means to be Jewish in ways we can only image. For the first time in Jewish history, there are children of mixed marriages who violate the "law of excluded middle" by asserting that they are simultaneously Jewish and Christian or Jewish and Italian. Whether these new forms of identity spell the end of the Jewish people or its continuation in some new guise cannot be easily predicted since there is no true historical precedent for this development: it might be compared to the great sea change that took place with the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in the first century of the Common Era. Such movements of revolutionary transformation are always fraught with peril, but whatever one's view of it, the task for those concerned with the place of Jews in America is not to condemn or condone but rather to respond creatively to what is now an inevitable social process.

-from an essay by David Biale, Koret Professor of Jewish history and director of the Center for Jewish Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, in Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism, edited by Biale, Galchinsky, and Heschel.

FEED THE BODY WHILE YOU FEED THE SOUL

Two Potato Latkes

5 cups shredded peeled sweet potato (about 1 ½ pounds)
2 cups shredded peeled baking potato (about ½ pound)
1 cup shredded fresh onion
¼ cup all purpose flour

¾ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
3 large egg whites, lightly beaten
4 teaspoons vegetable oil

1. Combine the first 6 ingredients in a large bowl. Stir in the beaten egg whites. Heat 2 teaspoons vegetable oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Spoon 4 (1/2 cup) potato patties into the skillet, and flatten with a spatula: sauté for 7 minutes. Carefully turn the patties over, and cook for 7 minutes or until patties are golden. Repeat the procedure with 2 teaspoons vegetable oil and the remaining mixture. Yield: 8 servings(serving size 1 Latke)

CALORIES 138 FAT 2.5g PROTEIN 3.5G CARBS 25.4 FIBER 2.7 CHOL 0 IRON .7MG SODIUM 20MG
JUST IGNORE THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND ENJOY THE HOLIDAY- WORK OUT EXTRA NEXT WEEK.

CHANUKAH begins Friday night December 19th and ends December 27th

When lighting your Chanukah candles on the two Friday nights light your Chanukah candles before you light your Shabbat candles.

Many couples have asked what time they should be lighting Shabbat candles. The traditional answer is 18 minutes before sunset. But my answer, Karen's, is if you get home after sunset light them anyways. We do not yet live in a perfect world.

Official Shabbat Candles lighting times:

November 14th 4:40pm November 21st 4:10pm November 28th 4:06 pm
December 5th 4:04pm December 12th 4:04 pm December 19th 4:05pm December 26th 4:09pm

**Please do contact Rabbi Aryeh and Karen Alpern 518-893-0808
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We look forward to hearing from you!**