



WELCOME

ברוך הבא

This is our first issue, our first newsletter, a first among first, this first year. It is an exciting time for our congregation. There is no question that we are living and making history in Port Saint Lucie and in Judaism. That is exhilarating for us and for our children. As with everything else in our congregation, this newsletter is for us and will be built by us. We are publishing online and will have color paper copies available at the Bayit (and then at our future home once it is completed).

Let us start by saying thank you. Thank you for reading this newsletter. Thank you for being a member of our congregation if you have joined us already or for your interest in joining us if that is your reason for reading this newsletter. Our congregation welcomes you. We welcome you to our joyful experience of Judaism.

Our practice is Reform Judaism with a renewal flair. What does that mean? We do not require kosher food (no pork or shellfish, please) at our functions, we use electricity and technology, we are modern. The renewal flair means we use music, are joyful, look for meaning and healing between and among ourselves. We are faithful to the roots of Judaism and find meaning in modern life. We recognize that all of us are on our own spiritual journeys and that we choose to travel part of that journey together today.

Some of us are in families with non-Jewish individuals, they and you are welcome. Some of us are exploring many facets of our identities, seeking to learn how Judaism informs that aspect of our being. We welcome that inquiry and we welcome you. We are deeply Jewish. We will never push that on anyone. We are not seeking converts, nor do we consider ourselves superior to any other human beings. We believe all human beings are created in the Divine image and each person is on their own spiritual journey. The High Holy Day season we are entering this month is actually an affirmation of that belief.



If you would like to help edit this newsletter, please step forward. If you would like to write articles for it, please step forward. If you want to place an ad in the newsletter, the form is at the end of it or online at www.eitzchayim.org at the newsletter tab. If you would like to help us find advertisers, please step forward.



Rabbi: Rabbi Shafir Lobb

Treasurer: Mia Pope

Secretary: Rosie Pope

Directors: Stuart Address

Carol Cobb

Ken Heller

Andre Tarraf



Rabbi's Corner

With beginnings is how Torah starts and it is where we started. While I and the Board tend to imagine that everyone knows the story of how we started, that is probably not the case for everyone reading this first newsletter, especially at some future date when we are all long gone and the history of Eitz Chayim is being researched. We are actually trying to be mindful of that time and leave them enough data to be able to reconstruct this period.

That attitude might appear to be hubris, but as a scholar myself doing active research right now, I can tell you that I wish people thought about these things when doing so was easy. We are only 40 days into the new congregation, 50 days into the concept, and already the days are blurring in my mind. Blurring days may not seem important now, but it may be important to understanding the sequence of how certain decisions influenced other decisions, because every decision made limits or widens the choices available when other decisions are made.

For example, when the Board, of which the rabbi is a non-voting, ex-officio (which is a fancy Latin term meaning "by virtue of office") member, decided to make the congregation a non-dues model, that decision shifted so much of the discussion and actually made forming the new congregation much easier. The decision to extend that model to the religious school and High Holy Day services was easy, since these are areas where so many people ask for exceptions and those who can are asked to give extra anyway. Why not make the entire congregation "Heart-and-Pocket" and treat people like adults? There was certainly enough data from other congregations around the US and Canada showing that the model works, including others that had started just that way.

That model has so many implications. Everyone IS a full member, not just treated "like" one. There really is no difference. As soon as someone submits a membership form, they are in process. We consider them a member. The next step is a meeting with the rabbi to discuss their commitment to the congregation. What are the things about which they are passionate: education, enhancing the worship experience of members, helping with oneg Shabbat preparation, interfaith activities, greeting people, and so on. An engagement commitment is made with the congregation is made at that meeting and a copy of that commitment is given to the membership committee, who then connects that engaged member's contact info to the appropriate committee chairs (or help them start the committee since we are so new).

So we are starting with beginnings. Just as the new year gives each of us a chance to start with a blank sheet of paper in a new chapter of our lives, our new congregation gives all of us a blank sheet of paper in a new chapter of Jewish life in Port Saint Lucie. Thank you for helping us write what we believe will be a wonderful and exciting chapter in that history. We are working to make it colorful, inviting, musical, spiritual, and inclusive. Please join us as we make it meaningful and joyous to be Jewish!

Wishing you and yours a sweet, healthy, abundant, and happy New Year!

לשנה טובה!



As we approach the High Holy Day season of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, the Days of Awe, the members of the initial Board of Directors of Congregation Eitz Chayim pause to reflect upon where we were less than sixty days ago, and where we stand now as a budding and vibrant fledgling Congregation. The differences are both striking and exciting.

Less than two months ago, we were an informal twice monthly Chavurah, meeting for fellowship and a monthly Havdalah service at a local hotel. Today, we are an actual Congregation, holding Friday evening and Saturday morning Shabbat services, operating a Hebrew School with more than one dozen inquisitive young minds of varying ages, and conducting our first High Holy Day services.

Less than two months ago, we met in friends' homes through their gracious generosity and then at a local hotel as we grew too large to impose upon someone's home. Today, we meet in our own Bayit, a temporary home, which has a sanctuary containing a beautiful ark and a Torah table; both of which were in varying degrees manufactured through labors of love by members of our congregation. Today, we have a social hall and a kitchen, stocked for Oneg Shabbat, Kiddush lunches, and other events. Today, we have a Hebrew School with desks, chairs, books, and other basic essentials to facilitate a learning environment to excite and stimulate the young as they explore their Judaism.

Today, we also have actual architectural plans for a beautiful synagogue of our own, which will soon start construction. Today, we meet in the spacious and comfortable Town Hall at Tradition for our services during the High Holy Day season, for Passover sederim, for an upcoming concert (save the date - October 18 - see flier this issue), for a Simchat Torah celebration, and a Hanukkah celebration.

Today on Masilunas, tomorrow in Tradition, and next year in our own home on Rosser. However, as we grow, this Board and Rabbi Lobb remain clear on several fundamental mission statements:

- We will be a community which will help each other, and give of themselves in various ways to the rest of our community.
- We will be a friendly community, with an open heart to all, especially newcomers within our midst, and we will greet everyone as friends so that we all feel welcome and at home.
- We will be a family friendly community. Strike that; we will be a FAMILY community. All of our services are family services. While we will strive to minimize excessive noise from those too young to know better, we will accept with open hearts all children who are the future of Judaism in our community, in our nation, and throughout the World. We will learn to lovingly tell parents when children are excessive and parents will learn to lovingly hear when such information is given them.
- We will be a community operating without a fixed dues structure. Instead, we ask and expect that those who join with us will periodically donate any amount which their personal situation permits to help keep us operating, paying expenses, and providing services. While we will always gladly accept and need financial donations, whether of a varying periodic nature or a regular ongoing nature, we will also gratefully accept the involvement of those among us in any way they can offer themselves to our mutual endeavor.

CONT next page.



To facilitate some of our goals, as we evolve and see needs arise, we have already made changes as a result of suggestions from those within our community, and from our own observations. For example, we have now moved the “children’s’ room” from adjacent to the sanctuary to the other side of the Bayit to facilitate a decrease in noise and an increase in the ability of each person to bring themselves into an emotional space to pray.

In closing, please permit me to say a few final words about our Board and our Rabbi.

Our initial Board was not elected; we were drafted out of a communal desire to build a new Jewish community in Port St. Lucie and on the Treasure Coast. We serve to bring about not simply our vision, but your vision as well. Therefore, please offer your vision. We must have it so that when we walk into our permanent building, it is one to which each of us rightfully feels connected.

Rabbi Lobb has performed beyond all human expectations in working to build our growing group. Rabbi regularly works into the wee hours of the morning attempting to pay attention to each and every detail which might otherwise get lost in the shuffle of overwhelming details in our embarking on this journey. Rabbi is engaged in a devotion of love, seeking to provide for us all what we need from a Jewish community, and to provide for herself a home where she can serve G-d, perform her calling as the 23rd generation of Rabbis in her family, with us and our progeny as beneficiaries.

At present, Rabbi Lobb works without salary, without stipend, without compensation of any kind. Rabbi Lobb is working on faith; which, however, in our real world does not pay the bills. As a Board, we are making every endeavor to get us to a point quickly, where we can provide first some small compensation, then reach a juncture where we can actually provide the salary and benefits to which a Rabbi is justly entitled.

Please help us. Help us in this task, help us in growing our wonderful friendly congregation. Help us with your money (yes, we do need it) and help us with your time, your service, and your presence. Together, we ARE Congregation Eitz Chayim.

Shalom,

Stuart Address, Director



Dates of IMPORTANCE:

Next Kahal Session (Monthly Congregation Meeting): September 20 @ Noon - BAYIT

Succah Building (Basic Building) and Bageling: September 20 @ 9:30 AM - BAYIT

Succah Building (Finishing) and Bageling: September 27 @ 9:30 AM - BAYIT

**EREV SUKKOT - Pot Luck - Festival Meal / SHORT service - Games (barbeque if we get a grill)
September 27 @ 6:00 PM - BAYIT**

NO MONTHLY HAVDALAH in September due to High Holy Day Season



THE ROSH HASHANAH FAMILY TABLE

At Rosh Hashanah our family tables are laden with all our special family favorites and memories, all symbolizing the hopes for a good and healthy New Year. The dishes we prepare all remind us of the sweetness and joy that the season offers. The ingredients honey, carrots, raisin, and apples along with their warm aromas as they cook, not only fill the kitchen, but the and most importantly, the heart.

Speaking of hearts..... I have found a lovely recipe for Honey Cake Cupcakes with Caramelized Apples. It is gluten free, grain free, dairy free, and free of refined sugar. So, you can enjoy the memories, as you fill your home with aromas from your childhood and prepare for a Happy and Healthy New Year.

L'Shanah Tovah to you all.

Carol Marie

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 325F.

Put sugars and vegetable oil in a mixing bowl, beat til very well blended.

Add eggs one at a time, mixing well after each egg.

Sift together flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt, and gradually stir into sugar and eggs, mixing til just blended.

Stir in apples, pecans, and vanilla.

Pour into buttered and floured 9x13" baking pan, and bake in oven until an inserted toothpick comes out clean (about 1h 15 min.), begin checking after about 50 minutes.

Remove from oven and allow to cool completely.

While cake is cooling, make glaze, by melting butter in saucepan, add both sugars and salt.

Stir til blended and cook over medium heat for 3 minutes.

Stir in cream, cook 2 minutes, stirring constantly.

Use a skewer or toothpick and poke holes all over top of cake, then pour warm glaze all over surface.

Serve warm or at room temperature.

ENJOY! Serves 12 (or one teenager)



1 cup brown sugar
1 cup white sugar
1 1/2 cups vegetable oil
3 eggs
3 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon salt
5 fresh apples, peeled and diced in 1/2-inch pieces
1 1/4 cups coarsley chopped pecans
2 1/4 teaspoons vanilla

For glaze:

4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup white sugar
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 pinch salt



Religious School is just getting started. The students have made Rosh HaShanah cards and Honey Pots. We had an interesting and deep discussion with Rabbi about bullying at the very first session. While no actual Hebrew instruction has started, assessments have begun and we have decided to do individualized instruction with each of our students to maximize advancement. If your child has not yet been assigned an assessment, please contact the rabbi and make sure that she has the appropriate email for your child in the system. Thanks!

Our commitment is to have all of the fourth and higher grade students decoding smoothly by Chanukah so that we can be doing true language instruction into the spring months, not just decoding. With Ms. Ruth teaching modern Hebrew and Rabbi teaching Torah and prayer Hebrew, as well as the online instruction, we expect to have the students at par with their grade level by the end of the year, regardless of where they are now.



Please note, we would normally want to include Yahrzeits, anniversaries, birthdays, donations, and many other such very important information in an edition of our newsletter. Everyone is new, so welcome everyone! We are just getting around to tabulating the Yahrzeits, anniversaries, birthdays, and donations, as there is just so much information to input into the database that we were overwhelmed. We apologize. We admit we prioritized getting the High Holy Day services accomplished over getting those bits and pieces in place and into the newsletter. Next month we hope to have a double month for you and that information. Thank you for your understanding.

We were confident that we grow over time and we knew that we would have more people for High Holy Day services than we could have in the Bayit, but the response has surprised us on many levels very pleasantly. We were well past 100 members before we started working on this newsletter. The simple volume of data to be input into the system has been impressive. Not surprisingly, the Rabbi has not been able to schedule any engagement commitment meetings with anyone yet because of the upcoming High Holy Day season, but she will be very busy next month as well getting to know everyone.

Rabbi said that she is looking forward to meeting everyone as there are so many new people in the congregation that she never met before, and that thrills her. All of us look forward to getting to know each other better over the coming weeks and months. We are glad you have joined with us. Young, old, in-between; single, with a partner, a friend, or with your own family, it makes no difference: you have family here - you ARE family here.



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Hashanah*



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for services.
See below*

September 13
Erev Rosh Hashanah
7:00 PM

September 15
Second Day
Rosh Hashanah
10:00 AM
At the HOUSE
3617 Masalunas

September 14
Rosh Hashanah
Morning
10:00 AM
Children Services
NOON



September 14
Open House &
Tashlich
2:00 PM

September 22
Erev Yom Kippur
KOL NIDRE
7:00 PM

September 23

Yom Kippur Morning Services 10:00 AM

Children Services 1:00 PM

Afternoon Services 4:00 PM

YIZKOR 5:00 PM

NEILA 6:00 PM

Break the Fast \$15.00
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5776

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Quick notes!

As if everything so far was not enough, of course there is more! <<< OCTOBER THINGS

YIZKOR for SHMINI ATZERET will be **SUNDAY, Oct 4**, at 7PM at the Bayit - as part of our **Sunday Learning** program. We will learn about YIZKOR and grieving rituals in Judaism and then share the ritual. Pot Luck dinner is at 6PM.

THEN ----- We are celebrating Simchat Torah at Traditions Square - **At the GAZEBO**. Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, the WORKS - 6PM. The Gazebo is just WEST of the steeple of the Town Hall, the High Holiday Services location. Please park in the Town Hall parking lot and let's celebrate the JOY of Torah! **MONDAY, OCT 5th**

And a reminder that our work is progressing on the plans for our new home. So far we do not yet know the date for the groundbreaking. We will keep you informed as soon as we hear anything. For those who have not yet see the drawings, here is the view from the parking lot:



Brought to you by
Congregation Eitz Chayim
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Concert at Tradition Town Hall!

Oct. 18th 4:00pm

Purchase tickets online
at eitzchayim.org
or check website for
ticket locations.

Ticket Prices:
\$25 each or get
5 friends together and
get them for \$20 a person!
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Tradition Town Hall
10489 SW Meeting Street
Port St. Lucie, FL 34987



The Long Run Ultimate Eagles Tribute



Sunday * October 18, 2015 * 4 PM





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(A Founding Member and an Initial Director of Congregation Eitz Chayim)

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