
CHADOSHOT ME' HADAR

"NEWS FROM HADAR"

TEMPLE HADAR ISRAEL

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RABBI'S MESSAGE

OF VISIONS AND VOYAGES

You are holding in your hand the first newsletter-by the grace of the Almighty-of Temple Hadar Israel. This singular occasion confers on me a singular privilege: to extend to you and to every congregant the most joyous salutations from the Rabbi's study-

Mazel Tov! Mazel Tov to all and a hearty L'Chaim!!!

Combining the physical resources of the two former congregations is under way-and it is appropriate in the season of a fast-approaching Chanukah that we all be involved in the material re-creation of our temple, its "chanukat ha-bayit." Let us pray, too, that the uniting of our community will give us faith and fortitude to work in whatever way we can for a greater "coming together" of our entire people.

Having basked in the warm glow of fraternal accomplishment for a month or two, we must now interrupt what may turn to a hollow complacency, in order to look at the realities of the road ahead. As the current expression puts it, "Let's get real!"

One reality is that we are now a single congregation primarily on paper. To translate this legal fact into a living reality, we need a shared vision of where we wish to go. Such a vision will not be that of a single individual or that of one former congregation. It will not even be the rabbi's vision. My first newsletter column upon coming to New Castle was entitled: "The Rabbi: A User's Guide," which

pointed out that the momentum and energy of a congregation's life comes inevitably from the membership—or it comes from nowhere, and another, sadder inevitably takes over.

The vision of a vibrant Jewish congregation in New Castle must be a composite of the views and traditions of an active, caring membership. Not its officers...not its directors...not its trustees...but everyone possessing the conviction and desire that our temple live and flourish.

There are three general areas to a temple's activity, corresponding to three Hebrew names for the one Greek word, "synagogue": beit midrash—house of learning, beit tiflyah—house of prayer or worship, and beit knesset—house of assembly. HOUSE OF STUDY means that Hadar Israel is more than a child-drop-off for Hebrew or Sunday School. It is rather the place of lifelong learning for families and individuals, whether that learning is the study of a specific text, a lesson in reading the prayer-book in Hebrew, or a discussion following a film-viewing.

As a HOUSE OF WORSHIP, Temple Hadar Israel must be ready to explore, and occasionally to establish, modes of prayer that speak to our minds and hearts, that address our ethical imperatives and our spiritual yearnings, that celebrate the liturgy of our people and its meaningful purchase on us today. We have the obligation to pray together, just as we do to comfort and sustain one another. Every service in our Temple is also a call to participate in community and to strengthen it.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY is the third and enclosing side of the congregational figure. In order to become a single community, we need to eat together, to sing together, to laugh and dance together—and, on sad occasions of grieving and loss, even to shed tears together.

In looking at this sketchy agenda, two crucial realities become obvious:

1. We need, all of us, seriously to contemplate giving up passivity and inertia—that is, moving the Temple up at least ten notches in the hierarchy of our priorities.
2. To recognize that far from having the leisure to kvetch, quibble, and equivocate, we are rather at

the beginning of a new voyage, one that requires full attention, participation, commitment.

In the days of our ancestors, when travel was considerably more hazardous than it now is, Jewish travelers commonly said a prayer called *T'fillat HaDerech*, Prayer for a Journey. Rabbi Sheila Weinberg has revived the prayer by giving it a modern "place and habitation." It is her second, and last, stanza that I believe an especially appropriate closing for this column.

A prayer for the journey.

For the journey we take in this fragile vessel of flesh.
A finite number of years and we will reach
The unknown, where it all began.
Every life, every day, every hour is a journey.
In the travel is the discovery,
The wisdom, the joy.
Every life, every day, every hour is a journey.
In the travel is the reward,
The peace, the blessing.

P.S. My warmest wishes for a Chanukah filled with Light and deLight, with tranquility and peace and love.

THE FIRST STAGE

The first stage of the sorting and movement operation of books, fixtures and mementos from Temple Israel began Sunday, November 9, 1997 at 9:30 A.M. A good start was made but much additional work needs to be done. Additional Sunday work sessions will be held at 9:30 on every Sunday until the operation is completed. If you have a few hours to give to this necessary project, please be at Temple Israel at the appointed time. Thank you.

Marvin Lebby, Sander Rubenson and Aaron Cohen met with the Eckles architectural firm to open bids on Tuesday November 11, 1997 for the removal of the stained glass windows from Temple Israel and their installation in Temple Hadar Israel. Final plans were approved at the Congregation meeting on November 25, 1997. The project will result in a dramatic enhancement of the Temple Hadar Israel Building and will be within the financial limits imposed by the joint agreement.