

Hello Temple Sinai!

Congratulations to the Fourth and Fifth grade class for leading such a thoughtful, engaging service for us, and a special thanks to Shelli Goldsweig for being such a skilled and encouraging teacher. Her class was able to connect Jewish history to Jewish values in smart and relevant ways. Thank you!

I'll be leading services this Friday Night, but then Tim and I are off for a vacation to Madrid to visit my niece and then southern Spain to visit Jewish Andalusia and the Alhambra. We are very excited but we will miss you while we are gone.

At the end of this email is a **REPORT ABOUT A BILL IN THE VERMONT LEGISLATURE** that we've been working on, so please read that.

And remember, save the date for **PURIM - March 23**. Our Spiel will be: **"Shushan Rhapsody – The Megillah According to Queen."** And the first **READ-THROUGH** will be on **February 13 at 7 pm**.

Here are this week's services

BOARD INSTALLATION and KABBALAT SHABBAT
Friday Night, Feb. 8, 6:30pm—Oneg to follow.

*"Pick from each of your tribes leaders
who are wise, discerning, and experienced"* (Deut 1) –

This week's service will be our usual music filled service, with additional singing and dancing to **install our new Board**. It will also be **David and Audrey Chafetz** last service before they move, so come to thank them for all they have done. Oneg to follow.

SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES.

Saturday Morning, Feb. 9, 9:30am

Honor Shabbat by joining us for our uplifting, calming, chanted traditional morning service that has lots of greatest hits of Jewish music we only hear on Shabbat mornings. It lasts one hour. Led by Bruce Chalmer.

TORAH STUDY

Saturday Morning, Feb. 9, 10:30am – 12noon

PARASHAT T'RUMAH– Building the Ark

This week's Torah portion is [Parashat T'RUMAH Exodus 25--27:19.](#)

This week the Torah moves from law and ethics to the creation of the tabernacle and the tremendous level of skilled arts and crafts that go into making the tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant, and the sacred objects in the Sanctuary.

Our Torah Study is inclusive and discussion-centered, where we endeavor to understand the Torah portion of the week, and relate it to the issues of the day and the issues in our lives as modern people. Join our vibrant group of people for a intellectual and spiritual reflection and exchange of ideas.

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENT—March 1-2

Noam Wolf

Sh'lichah (cultural emissary) serving UJA-Federation in New Hampshire

Noam will be coming to Temple Sinai. I worked with Noam in New Hampshire and really wanted to bring her here, so I've been negotiating with Federation to make that happen. Noam is a

jazz singer and professional musician, so on Friday night, she will help us ‘sing a new song’ and ‘make a joyful noise.’ On Saturday afternoon at 4, she will be bringing an outstanding workshop called **Israel 2048**, which uses *posters created by Israeli art students to imagine Israel at 100* to explore the current culture, contradictions, and complexities of Israel. Some of the posters are very positive and others are highly critical of Israel in a variety of ways that prompt excellent discussion and conversation. I have been wanting to bring this poster workshop as a way of opening up our honest dialogue about Israel outside of any events or crises.

REPORT BACK ON VERMONT HOUSE BILL 3

Last week, we got word that the Vermont House was going to vote on a bill that aims to incorporate more education and data collection about racism, prejudice and bias, in part by ensuring inclusion of under-represented groups in the curriculum. After some of the racist events that have occurred in the past years, a working group was created to draft the bill, which did not pass when it was last introduced as part of a much larger education bill. This year, the group brought the bill as a stand-alone, and it was fast-tracked in the Vermont House. The bill was very good, and included issues of concern to African-Americans, LGBT people, Native Americans, Migrants, and other groups that were perceived as marginal or experiencing hate and bias. Unfortunately, the bill did not include anti-Semitism, or Islamophobic incidents. I, along with Rabbi Small of OZ and Rabbi Feinsilber of JCOGS, (as well as several congregants with connections to the legislature) got in touch with our representative and asked that they include anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in the bill, since our communities are targets for such attacks. The legislature was VERY responsive, and immediately began drafting language to add it. They invited the three rabbis to testify at the State House, and the result was a bill that included a definition of ‘ethnic group’ that includes Jewish people, and includes data collection of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic incidents in the schools. The bill passed the house unanimously on a voice vote and now moves to the Vermont Senate.

The only down side was that the original working group felt we bypassed them at the last-minute (we let them know we had not been included in the years of work preparing the bill). There was also a rumor going around that the three rabbis wanted to sink the bill. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Each of us started our remarks by saying we fully support the bill and want it to pass; we simply wanted anti-Semitic and Islamophobic incidents included and addressed in the curriculum. We live in times of distrust and division, and we have seen it in this, but already there are conversations and plans on how to heal the divisions and work more closely as allies. May those bear sweet fruit in the future. Meanwhile, we are very proud of the work we did and our ability to affect change democratically through the legislative process. It was truly an honor working with the Vermont legislators who were responsive, caring, and only wanted the best bill.

SHALOM